

NAXALBARI AND INDIAN REVOLUTION

PROMODE SENGUPTA

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Introduction

Suddenly there has been a spate of books about Naxalbari. If the decade of the seventies did not quite turn out to be the decade of revolution, it does seem to have ended up as the decade of books on revolution. It is possible, of course, to go on endlessly about the various ironic implications of this statement, as political commentators, particularly on the Left, are so fond of doing. But it would be wrong to overlook the significance for the future course of Indian politics of the theoretical and programmatic debates that have now emerged out of this literary profusion. Because it seems to me that the continuing experience of what is now commonly called the "Naxalite" movement, not only in its specific political expression in the several localised and seemingly abortive experiments in rural insurgency, but in its wider ramifications, all over the Indian subcontinent, in the field of social thought—economic, political and cultural—is of profound historical significance. I think that it is possible to argue that this wider movement in the last decade has, in fact, forced people to confront some of the most fundamental issues concerning the structures and processes of power in contemporary Indian society in a manner that is sharper, more direct and integral, and more revolutionary, than anything since the emergence of Gandhi fifty years before. This argument does not necessarily involve an acceptance of the vastly exaggerated claims that are still being made about the actual political impact of the movement in the areas of insurgency, nor does it presume that the often simplistic and crude theoretical statements that were said to underlie the movement, were correct or its naive programmatic campaigns valid in terms of any realistic political strategy for the seizure of state power. Nor does this argument entail a dismissal of the historical significance of the long history of the Indian communist movement which preceded that brief uprising in the foothills of Darjeeling in 1967. What it does

highlight, however, is the fact that it is only in that last decade or so that the most critical questions have been asked about the new and changing regime of power in post-colonial India, and that it was the political challenge of Naxalbari, with all its theoretical naivete and tactical "adventurism", that thrust these questions upon the social consciousness of the Indian people, especially of its politically articulate and leading sections .

It may be worthwhile to list at least some of these questions that now occupy the forefront of discussions on Indian society and polity. First of all, there has been the long and continuing debate among economists about the mode of production in agriculture in India, a debate that has evoked great interest not only in neighbouring Pakistan and Bangladesh, but in the wider international arena of academic scholarship on underdevelopment, colonialism, "peripheral capitalism", etc. Whatever one's judgment may be on the quality of this debate, it is clear that ten years after it was begun in the pages of the *Economic and Political Weekly*, the *Social Scientist* and *Frontier*, the debate's central issues have expanded far beyond the original and somewhat simpleminded controversy about semifeudal and capitalist relations of production and have now created a much more lively and authentic awareness of the complexities of the structures and processes of production and exploitation that exist in various regions of the Indian subcontinent, both in their history and in their contemporary and rapidly changing reality. In particular, there is much greater awareness now of the diversities of production organisations and of the social forms of existence of labour, and what is more significant, of the *reasons* for the continued existence of such diversities. In other words, there is much greater concern now to try and understand in all its concreteness the *unevenness* of capitalist development in India, to locate the specific social structures and forces that resist a more complete realisation of the full consequences of generalised commodity production, of the specific *political* forms of articulation of class demands in such situations

of transition, and of the specific role in all this of the state in its twin aspects of domination and legitimation of class rule. Further, these concerns, accompanied by a healthy urge to settle the points at issue by referring to concrete empirical facts from the field, have led to a very large number of surveys that were carried out in the last decade, by academics as well as political workers, into the changing realities of rural economy and society in various parts of the subcontinent. All of these, it seems to me, are historically linked to the political challenge that was implicit in Naxalbari.

The second area in which the last decade has seen much new questioning on the Left in India is that of the complex structures and processes of *power* in Indian society. The "Naxalite" movement, it is now widely acknowledged, had relied heavily—and many would say, mistakenly—on the spontaneous spirit of militant resistance among the peasant masses. In so doing, it directly challenged the strength as well as the effective legitimacy of the liberal-bourgeois state structure. The failure of the various attempts to start the final devastating prairie fire did not, however, lead to a quiet confirmation of the basic viability and social legitimacy of the Indian state. Because the political challenge of Naxalbari forced the state to bare its teeth, to show its ugly face stripped of the facades of bourgeois legality, populist reformism and tolerance of dissent. In fact, in those parts of the country where the "Naxalite" movement was able to mount a significant challenge, the utter fragility of ruling-class liberalism and of the rule of law was exposed long before the Emergency when the rest of the world finally sat up and took notice of the fact that all was not well with "the world's largest democracy".

And yet, the insurgencies were finally crushed ruthlessly and fairly quickly. And once the dust of recriminations, of accusations of "adventurism" and "stabs in the back", of conspiracy trials and campaigns for release of prisoners had

settled, a much more extended debate began to emerge within the Indian Left about the nature, the processes and the mechanisms of state and class power. The new experiences of peasant insurgency in various parts of the country were tallied against the received wisdom that had been distilled out of Telengana and Tebhaga and made into an orthodoxy in the Indian communist movement. Now it became clearer than ever before that the fundamental aspects of popular consciousness, its norms of political obligation or of legitimate revolt, its distinctive cultural idioms of solidarity, the specific process and form of determination of class demands within this ideological domain defined by elements such as caste or kinship or locality or community—these had never been adequately confronted in communist theoretical debates in India. It also became clear that the structures of state and class power in India were much more complex and differentiated, mediated at many levels by diverse economic and cultural institutions, than was implied by the rather straightforward characterisations of the Indian state put forward by the numerous contending political groups on the Indian Left. Hitherto unquestioned orthodoxies of the Left—of central planning, the public sector, the mixed economy, of “non-capitalist paths of development”, of the gradual “socialisation”, of the “commanding heights of the economy”, of the linear historical development of the Indian democratic movement and the triumph of the forces of “progress” over those of “reaction”—all of these political verities of the Left Opposition were turned around and shown to have become the new foundations of the ideological legitimization of ruling-class power in post-colonial India.

It would be wrong to suggest that these new concerns resulted directly in a radically new formulation of the central questions of the Indian revolution, or that the conceptual terms of debate were transformed into a novel radical-revolutionary discourse. Political debates are still conducted on the Indian Left in terms that would be wholly familiar to members of the Bolshevik Party at the time of the October Revolution. And yet, every radical journal in India today

is full of attempts to "reinterpret" the terms and principles of theoretical orthodoxy, to fit new facts to old theories and in the process to bend and stretch them to their limits. Even more striking are the achievements in the field of artistic production, particularly the cinema and the theatre, where, unencumbered by the rigid formalisms of theoretical discourse, the new urge to portray the realities of Indian life has resulted in some remarkably effective and truthful examples of radical art. And finally, one can hardly miss the significance of the increasing gap between the almost ritual theoretical pronouncements of the parties on the Left and their day-to-day political practice, which makes it so easy for their critics to charge them with unprincipled opportunism, *ad hoc*-ism and numerous other crimes of this sort, but which only reflects the fact that in their relations with the state structure and their participation in the political process these parties already recognise a degree of complexity which their theoretical presuppositions are quite incapable of encapsulating.

If one is prepared to accept some of these benefits of historical hindsight, one would be in a position, I think, to better appreciate the merits and the significance of Promode Sengupta's critique of the politics of the CPI (ML) in 1969. It was, in a sense, one of the first "critiques from within", sharing many of the concerns as well as the hopes of those who in 1969 stood "to the left of the CPI (M)" and declared that there be an end to the politics of "revisionism" and an immediate renewal of the task of armed seizure of state power, but disagreeing vehemently with the specific programmatic, and thereby theoretical, formulation of this political task proposed by the newly founded CPI (ML) and principally by its leader Charu Mazumdar. Reading it now, twelve years after it was first written, one can hardly fail to notice an almost uncanny prevision of what would be written in many later "critiques from within", those post-mortem reports composed in days of defeat, despair and endless theoretical "rethinking".

But it would be foolish to read a political text such as

this as some sort of brilliant anticipation of impending disaster. The text ought to be read historically. And the historical fact remains that Sengupta failed to persuade most of those whom he had set out to persuade. His terms of discourse were perfectly orthodox, and his adherence to his own discursive tradition explicit, sometimes at considerable cost to the flow of his argument or the economy of his style. He was arguing for a new revolutionary politics, but entirely within the discursive ambit occupied by the old ; his critique sought to demonstrate that the politics of the "revisionist" parties as well as the projected politics of the new "revolutionary" party were both deviations from the "true" orthodoxy and hence "wrong". If his intended readership at the time was not largely persuaded by his arguments, it was not because they did not share his conceptual system or affiliate with the same discursive tradition. It was rather because within that discursive tradition, apart from his own "interpretation" of the principles of revolutionary politics, Sengupta had no recourse to any independent criteria by which he could support his claim about the "correctness" of his interpretation, or his opponents any reason to doubt its "falsity". Sengupta's critique was not, therefore, an "anticipation" of the arguments that would be given as to why the movement failed ; it must be treated along with all the documents Sengupta criticises as forming part of the same *historical preconditions* that made the "Naxalite" movement possible.

Promode Sengupta was very much a maverick revolutionary. He recounts his own political affiliations in different periods of his life in the interview recorded by the Nehru Memorial Museum and included in this volume. These affiliations were diverse, including a remarkable spell as propagandist in the journal *Azad Hind* published from within Nazi Germany in the years 1942-44. He later went on to produce some excellent work of radical scholarship, most notably his history of the Indian Revolt of 1857. Sengupta, in fact, came from an age in the life of middle-class Bengal when political action was above all an intense

personal commitment—both intellectual and moral—to the cause of national liberation. Historical judgment will probably decide against personalities of this kind as successful leaders of prolonged and organised mass-revolutionary struggles. And yet, Promode Sengupta's life and work cannot fail to remind us of the continued relevance of yet another fundamental question of Indian politics that was once again brought to the forefront of political life by the "Naxalite" movement—the question of the proper historical role of a self-conscious radical intelligentsia uncompromisingly committed to the task of revolution.

2 June 1982

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I

Whither Revolution ?

(Marxism Or Terrorism)

Promode Sengupta
(Chairman, Naxalbari O Krishak
Sangram Sahayak Committee)

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**[English translation of Promode Sengupta's Bengali book
entitled *Biplab Kon Pathe*. Translated by Dr. Tanika Sarkar]**

Preface

Why is it that the Communist movement in India, the movement for peoples' democratic revolution, is being repeatedly defeated despite the stern struggle and self-sacrifice by the general party members and the masses? Why is it that the Right revisionist as well as dogmatic Leftist leaders are being able to misguide it again and again? Why is it that the Naxalbari movement, despite its success in indicating once more the revolutionary path is heading towards failure under the influence of petit-bourgeois revolutionism? Is not the ideological weakness of the Indian Marxist revolutionaries the prime cause of all this?

History teaches us that the European bourgeoisie had prepared public opinion through an ideological campaign against the feudal classes over many years before it waged the revolution and seized power. Marx and Engels had started the campaign for scientific socialism to prepare the working classes to seize state power more than a hundred years ago. In Russia and China, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, before they seized power, had to wage an uncompromising and enormous ideological battle against revisionism on the one hand and Left adventurism on the other for almost three decades.

Just as revolutionary theory is essential for revolution, so is the Communist Party of the working classes based on revolutionary theory. It must not be an ersatz 'Marxist' Party which considers victory in elections and forming a United Front Ministry as its aim or devotes all its energies to this end. It must be a party which upholds the seizure of state power through armed revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and hastens the work of reaching this goal by preparing the masses through day to day struggles. The revolutionary uprising in France in 1967 proves that a revolution cannot succeed without a proper Marxist party. The French re-

revolutionaries had captured all the factories, railways, ports, government and private offices, banks, courts, schools, colleges and universities but this immense rising failed in no time because of the absence of a revolutionary Communist Party.

How far have our revolutionaries tried to learn from these lessons ?

When half of this book had been printed, the police took away the manuscript after a search. That is why there has been a delay of two months in publishing this book.

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Promode Sengupta

Whither Revolution ?

1

IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE IS NECESSARY

We support active ideological struggle because this is the weapon which makes certain the unity within the Party and the revolutionary organisations in the interests of our battle. Every Communist and revolutionary must use this weapon. But liberalism avoids ideological struggle... Liberalism is an expression of opportunism and is fundamentally opposed to Marxism. It is negative and in a concrete situation it helps the enemy...

The life-force of Marxism is positive; we have to use Marxism to prevail over this negative liberalism. A Communist must have a broad mind, he must be dedicated and hard-working, he has to value the interests of the revolution like his own life and he must subordinate his personal interest to the revolution. Everywhere and always he must obey principles, he must fight tirelessly against wrong ideas and actions so that the collective life of the Party may be well-organised, the relations between the Party and the masses may be firm... Only then can he be regarded as a Communist. Those persons among us who have liberal tendencies must be resisted and for that all faithful, honest and active Communists must unite to bring them over to the correct path. This too is a task of ours on the ideological front. (Mao : *Combat Liberalism*, II, 31-33)

The armed rising of Naxalbari peasants was a most significant episode in India's revolutionary mass movement. Naxalbari started a new era in the liberation way of the Indian masses. This rising has rejuvenated the Thought of Mao Tse-tung—today the highest phase in Marxism-Leninism—in India's liberation struggle. The greatest contribution of the armed peasant rising of Naxalbari is that it has unmasked the revisionist, parliamentary leadership of the Indian Communist Parties and upheld the prime necessity for armed revolution before all.

The Thought of Mao which is the driving force behind today's world revolution had first manifested itself in the struggle of the Indian workers and peasants during the great Telengana peasant movement. Inspired by Mao's thought and led by Communist revolutionaries, the heroic peasants of Telengana succeeded in liberating a large area through armed struggle and protected this liberated zone for a few years by fighting with the enemy. Many of us have a fair idea as to how the revisionist leadership of the CPI betrayed this movement, so at present there is no need to discuss it.

After Telengana the Party once again fell into the revisionist trap. Both the Right and the Left Wing leaders in the Party made a bureaucratic deviation from the path of revolutionary mass struggle and began to direct the Party towards economism and parliamentarianism. There was practically no scope for ideological conflict, criticism and self-criticism inside the Party. Increasingly it got bogged down in sectarian scuffles among Right and Left Wing leaders. In this situation, discontent among many party members against opportunist leaders began to simmer. Many started to protest against revisionism, parliamentarianism, economism and sectarianism among the leaders and to press for a correct Marxist-Leninist orientation. But due to the petit-bourgeois form of organisation, the lack of Marxist-Leninist theoretical knowledge and many other weaknesses, this discontent was not channelled properly to show them the way.

When the CPI was going through this immense crisis, the 1962 Sino-Indian border clashes took place and its impact split

the Party. A "Marxist" Party was organised through imposition from above in a bureaucratic manner in the midst of internal squabbling, vitiated by the personal interests of the leaders. None of the basic internal problems of the Party—ideological conflict, establishing democratic centralism within the Party, self-criticism, criticism, avoiding bureaucracy—could be solved for the personal and factional interests of the leaders were given primacy. Those old leaders who had repeatedly misguided the Party, who had again and again betrayed the revolutionary mass movements like the RIN mutiny, Telengana, Susang, Kakdwip, retained leadership. But for all their spurious arguments and parroting of revolutionary slogans, they could not conceal the revisionist, parliamentary character of the programme which they adopted.

After its defeat in the China War the India Government took revenge on the Marxist Communist Party. The Party was more or less declared illegal and many of the cadres and leaders went to jail. In February-March 1966, at the time of the food movement and the campaign for prisoners' release, a mass upheaval erupted in Krishnanagore and soon started spreading all over West Bengal. This movement was led by revolutionary Communists and youth and student leaders. There was no need for any Party leaders. The leaders were released because of this movement but just after their release they began a dialogue with Congress leaders. None of the demands that had led up to the movement were fulfilled. The leaders devoted themselves to preparations for elections.

In the United Front that won the West Bengal elections and formed the United Front Government, the Marxist party was the most powerful constituent. At the time of the election the party leaders had promised the peasants that they would support their struggle for land. As soon as the Naxalbari peasants began this struggle, trusting in their promise, the neo-revisionist treacherous character of the "Marxist" leaders manifested itself. The Promode-Harekrishna clique played the role of butchers. Harekrishna Konar, the General Dyer of Naxalbari, revealed the heights of his revolutionary actions by murdering peasant women and children.

But the influence of the Naxalbari movement began to spread everywhere. It crossed the borders of West Bengal and spilled all over India and transcending India, appeared as the symbol of India's peasant movement in front of the whole world. It got wholehearted support from the Chinese Party. As in Telengana, the heroic peasants of Naxalbari once again indicated the correct revolutionary path to the revolutionaries, stimulated the articulation of their already existing discontent and brought about a qualitative change in India's revolutionary mass movement. A great upheaval began within the Party and the masses. The revolt of Communist revolutionaries against neo-revisionist "Marxist" leaders and their anti-Marxist-Leninist policies had begun.

The neo-revisionist leaders of the "Marxist" Party expelled many Communist revolutionaries in a bureaucratic manner and many revolutionaries left the Party. These revolutionaries started publishing the weekly *Deshabrati* from 6 July 1969 in support of the Naxalbari movement. They formed groups in different areas, following the Thought of Mao and started a great movement in support of Naxalbari. Many new youth and student comrades joined them. The "Naxalbari O Krishak Sangram Sahayak Samiti" was formed to provide a united leadership to this movement.

Comrade Charu Majumdar appeared before the masses as the leader of the Naxalbari movement. He had been the Secretary of the Darjeeling District Committee of the Party for a few years. He played a crucial role in the Naxalbari peasant movement. When this movement grew increasingly militant and the neo-revisionist leaders of West Bengal tried to crush it, Comrade Charu Majumdar confronted them with firmness. When the movement entered the phase of armed struggle Comrade Charu Majumdar naturally had tremendous influence over Communist revolutionaries. So when the Co-ordination Committee was formed with promises of uniting all Communist revolutionaries, everyone felt very hopeful. Communist revolutionaries had thought at the time that Charu Majumdar was the fittest person for uniting the various revolutionary groups. In that situation the first task was to unite the scattered revolutionary groups.

The second task at the time was to proceed towards building up a true Communist Party based on Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao. But Charubabu as well as other leaders in the Coordination Committee decided that Party could spontaneously be formed through a mass movement. They thought that the revolutionaries should first engage in spreading the revolutionary mass movement. In this situation the first declaration of the Coordination Committee was published in November, 1967.

The declaration proclaimed (1) the revolutionary struggles, especially those like Naxalbari, should be brought under the leadership of the working classes and should be unified (2) to direct the movements towards a peasant revolution through a struggle against economism (3) to fight uncompromisingly against revisionism and neo-revisionism, to spread the Thought of Mao among the masses and "to unite all revolutionaries inside and outside the Party on its basis" (4) to prepare a revolutionary programme and a tactical line based on a realistic analysis of the Indian situation according to the Thought of Mao. The declaration also said that "the time has come for us to begin to form a truly revolutionary Party." (*Liberation*, December 1967)

It is a matter of deep regret that Charubabu and the Coordination Committee failed completely in the task of establishing unity. They entirely lacked the broadmindedness and revolutionary flexibility necessary for carrying out this crucial task. On the contrary they leaned towards sectarian narrowness in an attempt to prove their revolutionary firmness. They could not get rid of the revisionist outlook and bureaucratic mentality that was the characteristic of their old Party. Ideological struggle was not even considered. Though they would frequently chart about the necessity for the other revolutionary virtue needed for this task—that is, self criticism—they showed no eagerness to actually apply it. All those defects that they had brought as a carry over from the old Party could have been overcome through self-criticism.

At first they had said that the Party would be formed through mass movement. But now they became eager to form

a Party and tried to convert the Coordination Committee into the Party.

The second declaration that came out six months after the first declaration by the Coordination Committee, told Communist revolutionaries in a clearly bureaucratic manner that all the pamphlets and journals that they were bringing out would have to be stopped and the Coordination Committee would have to be obeyed without a murmur. In their words : "We appeal to all revolutionaries who firmly believe in the Thoughts of Chairman Mao and have rebelled against revisionist and neo-revisionist leadership but who still maintain their separate groups to break up their groups and unite with the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries".

Needless to say that despite its impressive nomenclature this Committee was nothing more than a group like all the other groups. But in this second declaration they demanded that they were more equal, so the others should kowtow before them. The group interest of this Committee became the greatest obstacle in the way of uniting all Communists. Its leaders had mugged up the Thoughts of Mao but they had not really assimilated them. The second declaration proclaimed the leaders' demands for monopoly rights in revolution, revealing the heights of an arrogance appropriate to petit-bourgeois revolutionism and narrow mentality.

The second declaration had made it clear that the Coordination Committee leaders had taken their clique to be the Party and this was publicly proclaimed at the Maidan meeting on 1 May. They went back on the promise held out in their first declaration that they would unite Communist revolutionaries and formulate a programme. Instead, they formed the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) flouting the Marxist-Leninist methods of party formation. It is necessary to see whether this Party was a truly Communist Party or another petit-bourgeois faction.

During the two years between the formation of the Coordination Committee and the "Party" formation, the entire ideology of this "Party" concerning mass organisation, trade union movement, peasant movement, student movement, the

national problem, party formation and other problems has been clearly revealed in the writings of Comrade Charu Majumdar and the *Deshabrati* as well as through their activities.

Charubabu has firmly and clearly stated that they will not go in for mass organisation. In his own words : "If one accepts that a revolutionary situation exists in India, one has also to accept that the first task today is to organise a secret revolutionary Party and *not a mass movement*. This secret Party will lead the class struggle. We must remember the words of the Chairman, 'Never forget about class struggle' and it is through this class struggle that the broad working class will realise the necessity and inevitability of destroying the state machinery and the need for a peasant revolution to capture state power. Only then can working-class leadership be established in the peasant movement". (*To the Comrades and Other Writings*, p. 40)

These lines excellently expose the contradictions in the "thoughts" of Comrade Charu Majumdar and their deviation from Marxism-Leninism and Mao's Thought. In the first place he has entirely ignored the close interconnections between Party formation and mass organisation. There cannot be a strong Party without a powerful mass organisation and vice versa. A strong Party does not drop from the skies but grows from the country's soil. In the second place Charubabu sees the Party as an alternative to mass organisation—there cannot be a mass organisation if one goes in for the formation of a revolutionary Party and vice versa. Actually Charubabu sees the Party and mass organisation as contradictory elements not as interdependent and complementary to each other. In the third place, in his opinion, it is possible to capture state power without the active support of the masses, just by forming a revolutionary Party. Fourthly, Charubabu relies on mass spontaneity, not on conscious Communist programme of action. (The masses have been waging class struggle since ancient times, they have revolted many times but before the birth of Marxism they never considered the need for capturing state power. This cons-

sciousness does not come to them by a realisation of necessity and inevitability ; for that the long drawn out, conscious efforts of the revolutionaries through the Party and various mass organisations are needed).

The masses will automatically join the revolution just because they are aggrieved—this sort of cult of spontaneity flouts the conscious revolutionary programme of action upheld by Marxism. Whether the adherents to this cult want it or not, they help in spreading bourgeois influence among the masses and they move away from socialism.

While arguing about why we must not go in for organising or leading any form of mass organisation, trade union, *Krishak Samitis* etc, Charubabu says : “We know that when we were most under the influence of revisionism we had formed many organisations and used the Party units as complements to trade union work, that is why we failed to draw the working classes behind our politics.” (ibid. p. 29)

This is just dumping the responsibility of one on another's shoulders. They are making mass organisation responsible for their own mistakes. He has not raised the fundamental questions as to why revisionism became dominant in the Indian Party, or why the Party leadership succeeded in drawing the Party to the revisionist path. He has concluded his arguments by blaming mass organisation for everything. Is it not the real truth that the Party leaders failed to spread the correct, revolutionary Marxist-Leninist politics among the mass organisations ? And, at present, is this not just what the Communist revolutionaries have got to do ? Instead of that, now that the revolutionaries are seeking the right way according to Marxism-Leninism and Mao's Thought and are in revolt against revisionism, Charubabu is directing them to swing like a pendulum from one extreme to another and telling them to throw the baby out with the bathwater. The most dangerous thing of all is that Charubabu is trying to pass off these ultra leftist “thoughts” in the name of the Chairman. He seldom mentions Mao Tse-tung by name, but keeps on saying Chairman and goes on to say that the Chairman has taught us this or that *ad infinitum*. The title

of a *Deshabrat* article is "China's Chairman is our Chairman —Charu Majumdar." One dominant characteristic of Charubabu is that he always flings scattered quotations around in the name of Mao without mentioning the context, discussion or analysis in which Mao had used them. This is entirely Charubabu's personal style of work, not the scientific style of work based on Marxism-Leninism or the Thought of Mao, Charubabu has much distorted Mao's teachings in this manner and has created a lot of confusion among the revolutionaries through his own "thoughts". It is essential now to see whether these novel thoughts of Charubabu are at all in harmony with Marxism Leninism and Maoism. So the first task would be to grasp how Marxist-Leninist as well as Mao's Thought regarding mass organisation, trade union, peasants' movement and the national problem and their interconnections have developed over more than a century. Only then shall we understand whether Charubabu's thoughts are in line with Marxist thinking or not. Also the touchstone of this Marxist theory will enable us to understand the shape of the coming revolution in India and the task of the Indian revolutionaries in this context.

2

MARXISM AND ANARCHISM

At the time of the First International of the working classes, there was a tremendous impact of anarchism on the masses. Many sects had emerged in different European countries, based on anarchism and they had quite a lot of influence on not only the petit-bourgeoisie and the peasantry, but on the workers as well. Marx and Engels had to lead a difficult ideological struggle for a long time to consolidate the scientific theory of working class revolution. At first it was directed against Weitking and Proudhon and then against Bakunin in the International.

Anarchists were striving hard to spread their influence under Bakunin's leadership. Mikhail Bakunin was a well-

known, aristocratic, Russian revolutionary. He possessed many revolutionary virtues. He had sacrificed everything in the cause of the revolution. He had indomitable courage and exceptional energy and on top of everything he was an excellent orator. These virtues helped him to become highly influential among revolutionaries in all the countries.

In Bakunin's opinion the state is the enemy of the workers and the reason for their slavery. The first duty of the revolutionaries is to demolish the state machinery totally and this would immediately lead to the liberation of the oppressed. Since he believed that the state was the reason for man's slavery he violently opposed the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the state of the proletariat. He had no faith in political organisation and discipline as he believed that these too were chains. Bakunin had faith in the individual, not in class. His faith in the Will Force of Man arose out of this individualist philosophy. A few men with staunch determination can bring about a revolution and liberate the masses by destroying the state machinery of the ruling classes, there is no need for a class organisation of the workers or a political party to bring about a revolution. The difference between Marxism and anarchism is one of fundamental principles, not merely of tactics. Bakunin wrote about his ideal in his *God and the State* (1882) : "We revolutionary anarchists are the enemies of all kinds of states and state organisations...We believe that all kinds of state rule and all governments are by their nature external to the masses and so naturally they will evolve rules, regulations and aims which will be totally against the masses. Therefore we declare ourselves as the enemies of all forms of state organisation and we believe that the masses will be happy and free only when they will be able to build up a self-governed, entirely independent organ without falling under anyone's guardianship."

In Bakunin's opinion, greatest revolutionary strength resides not in the working-class but in the "lumpenproletariat" (thugs, thieves, beggars and criminals)—the poorest and most deprived section in society. He saw "revolutionary spirit" in lumpen elements and a reactionary "labour aristocracy"

among the workers. He never used the term 'working class' but said 'labourers' instead. To put in a nutshell, the basis of Bakunin's social revolution was totally opposed to Marxism.

In the earliest stage of Marxism, Marx and Engels had referred to the necessity for and mutual relationship between the immediate or minimum and maximum demands of the working classes in their *Communist Manifesto*. "The Communists do fight to realise temporary demands in order to look after the minimum demands of working class interests but even in the immediate struggles they represent the future of the movement." Anarchists have no minimum demand but they go straight to the maximum demand—to revolution; for this reason they assume no responsibility for the day-to-day struggles of the working classes. In this way they lose touch with the masses. There is total and fundamental difference between the two outlooks—Marxism is a revolutionary movement of the masses, a movement to bring about a fundamental revolution in the entire society whereas anarchism is a petit-bourgeois, sectional, adventurist movement, alienated from the masses. One characteristic of the Anarchists is to go in for extreme revolutionary slogans. Marx and Engels could not stand such petit-bourgeois revolutionists, given to phrase-mongering.

Marx considered that the economic and political struggle of the working class were inextricably woven together. Bakunin had opposed political organisation by the working class because he thought leadership and authority, which were the reasons behind the servitude of the workers, would inevitably come in the wake of political party formation. Bakuninites see a contradiction between politics and economics. Every country should have some secret groups for making the revolution. When the call for revolution comes, revolutionaries would smash the administrative machinery of the ruling classes. There would be no serious problem after this, everything would sort itself out and socialism would also be established. He tried to use the workers' International as a platform for unity among revolutionaries of different countries as well as for the propagation of socialism.

Bakunin was not opposed to the economic struggles of the workers but he never recognised the revolutionary role of working class organisations. According to him trade union should restrict themselves to economic demands like collecting funds, reducing daily working hours, increasing wages and so on. After the revolution these trade unions would emerge as basic organisations for directing production. Actually two contradictory attitudes should be noticed about the whole thing—Marx had a deep faith in the working class, which he saw as the real revolutionary power which would bring about the revolution and establish a society free from exploitation. Bakunin had hatred and lack of faith in the working class. He thought that workers did not understand politics and could not play any revolutionary role.

In 1871 the London Congress of the International accepted Marx's resolution on trade unions to resist Bakuninism. The resolution said that in workers' movements "*economic struggle and its political duty are inseparably united.*" Next year in 1872, the conference at the Hague (this was the the last conference of the First International) passed Marx's resolution on the close links between the economic and political struggles of the working class.

One can say that the history of the First International was primarily a history of the conflict between Marxism and anarchism. Anarchism evolved as the real enemy of Marxism. This petit-bourgeois revolutionism infiltrated into working class struggles using the name of revolution and socialism. Bakunin and his followers had created a lot of confusion in the International and the First International came to an end because of the extremist politics, adventurist activities and factional differences introduced by anarchists. At the same time, it was through this debate, this ideological conflict, that Marxism was consolidated within the international socialist working class movement.

Marx and Engels repeatedly emphasised the great significance and importance of the economic struggle of the trade unions but at the same time they also said that politics should be placed above economics. *Economic and political struggles*

are both unavoidable for revolutionaries. They had also pointed out the mutual relationship between the two struggles—that is, between the trade union and the party. They were always careful so that Right-wing reformists would not be able to transform economic struggles into economism on the one hand, and on the other hand, extreme revolutionaries would not be able to neglect the economic struggles of the masses in the name of revolution.

This invaluable lesson of Marxism was later the guide for the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin, for the Communist International and the parties within it, particularly the Communist Party of China under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung. It is also significant that Lenin, Stalin and Mao too had to fight, as Marx did, against Right-wing opportunism as well as Leftist adventurist petit-bourgeois elements on the question on the relationship between economic and political struggle.

To attach primary importance to politics does not mean that the trade union should be transformed into the political party, or that it should adopt the true party programme or that all differences between the trade union and the party should be eradicated. Trade unions are the organisational centres and assembly of the broad working masses. Apart from their own collective duties they also have broader political duties. The political party of the working class too must clearly declare its economic duties in its programme and accept the responsibility for directing the struggles of trade unions, peasant associations and students' movements.

When the modern working class first emerged in Europe after Industrial Revolution, the workers enjoyed no democratic rights, had very small wages and their daily working hours were as much as twelve to fourteen hours. They could

not vote and neither did they have the right to form trade unions or any other organisation. They came to win these democratic demands through bloody struggles over many years.

Marx began his working life under these circumstances. New problems such as the organisation of working class struggle against capitalist exploitation, the demolition of capitalist society and the establishment of a socialist order—all these were extremely complex then. There was no scientific theory at that time for leading these movements that had passed the test of actual struggle. Marx and Engels could establish the scientific theory of revolutionary workers' movement and socialism only through a long struggle. The yardstick for measuring the progress of the revolutionary workers' movement in any particular country is the capacity of these movements for absorbing the tenets of Marxism.

Working class movement at that time had split up into a number of Right-wing sects and the splits were obstructing the movement. Marx and Engels had to establish Marxism through waging an ideological battle against these sects. But although Marxism was established as the revolutionary theory of the working class, sectarian ideologies repeatedly come back in different guises in class-divided societies of different countries to distort working class movements. Marxism has to wage an unending ideological battle against this.

From the beginning Marx attached a lot of importance to the trade unions as the general assembly of the working class in the struggle against ruling-class exploitation and as "organising centres of the working class". Marx and Engels repeatedly referred to trade unions as the central focus of working-class unity, the centre for basic lessons and training in class and socialism, as schools of communism. Marx and Engels could visualise from the beginning that workers would be unitedly confronting the ruling classes after eliminating all competition from among themselves : and it would be in this way that the working class would occupy its place on the political platform as a liberated class and would undertake the responsibility for forming the socialist society of the future.

It was for this reason that Marx and Engels were extremely interested in trade unions. They directed this movement from its infancy by observing its every step, correcting its mistakes, applauding its strong points, showing up its weaknesses, and indicating political and tactical lines. At that time many used to see the trade union movement as the only form of workers' struggle, many others tried to restrict it to economic demands outside the pale of politics and, again, many others used to consider transforming the trade union into a political party.

Just as liberalism is the ideology of the bourgeoisie, so is socialism the ideology of the working class. In 1864 the First International of the working class was formed to organise the workers and disseminate socialist ideology among them. The basic questions considered by the First International were the unified trade union movement of the workers, their politics and the political party, the formation of socialism and a social order without exploitation and the international unity of the working class. In his famous inaugural address to the International, Marx gave a call to the workers to mobilise themselves in three types of organisation in order to reach the socialist goal—trade unions, the political party and the International. Marx had a deep faith in the revolutionary role of the working class. That is why he wrote to Engels on 18 February 1856: "The working class is revolutionary or nothing".

Three main trends can be noticed from the beginning of the working-class movement—reformism, anarchism and Marxism. Among these only Marxism is scientific socialism. Marx and Engels had to struggle hard against Right-wing reformism as well as Left-wing anarchism for many years to establish scientific socialism. Reformism was expressed through the leaders of British trade unions in the First International. The militancy that characterised British labour leaders during the Chartist movement in the fourth decade, was missing in the sixth decade. They were now turning into the hangers-on of British imperialism. They were emerging as advocates of narrow sectional craft unionism and restricting the trade unions to economic demands with no links with politics. Marx fought against such opportunist and reformist trade unionism

all his life. Most particularly, he repeatedly demanded that poor workers and agricultural labourers be also included in the trade unions. Again and again he warned the workers in the International that the trade union movement must not be "narrow and egoistic", it must fight for the complete emancipation of the oppressed millions.

The resolution that Marx had made the First International pass in 1866 in order to protect the trade union movement from the clutches of opportunist economism, has served as the guide for all communist revolutionaries in all countries from then on. Marx never belittled economic struggles of the workers but at the same time he drew their attention to the greater duty of the organised working class to liberate entire humanity from exploitation.

Marx and Engels established Marxism by fighting long and intensely against both Right-wing and Left-wing sectarian ideology. In this context one can cite the correspondence between Marx and Engels and then correspondence with Bebel, Liebknecht, Schweitzer, Lassalle, Kugelmann, Kautsky and others to show with what integrity, firmness and dedication they had to wage a lifelong uncompromising ideological and organisational struggle against sectarian ideas.

Marx and Engels saw the trade unions as a essential weapon in the hands of the workers in the class war against capitalist exploitation. They teach us the lesson that the working class has to continue with its day to day economic struggle through trade unions etc, but at the same time they must realise that without capturing political power they can never establish their dictatorship and end the exploitation and slavery under capitalism.

In Germany Lassalle had prepared a "programme" for the political party of the working class but he did not refer to "the organisation of the workers as a class through trade unions." Engels in a letter to the German labour leader Bebel in 1875 pointed out that this was a very important question, since trade unions were the true class organisations of the proletariat through which it carries on the day to day struggle against the capitalists and train itself for class struggle (*Correspondences*, p. 356).

Engels referred to not two but three types of class struggle in the labour movement. He spoke not only of economic and political struggle but also of ideological battles, which the working class through its party would have to wage in a planned and co-ordinated manner (*Peasant War in Germany* p. 33).

To sum up, Marxists will have to combine ideological, political and economic struggle in the class war for the proletarian seizure of state power and the establishment of a society free from exploitation.

4

ECONOMIC STRUGGLE AND ECONOMISM

Capitalism is rooted in commodity production. A commodity is an object which in the first place satisfies a human want, i. e., has use-value and in the second place it is something which can be exchanged with another object. Millions of commodities are being exchanged every day according to laws that are not arbitrary. Commodities are exchangeable because they have something in common. This common element is human labour.

Marx showed that at a certain level of social development money gets transformed into capital to carry on production, capital buys not only raw materials or machinery but also human labour power. Labour-power also becomes a commodity like any other. The owner of capital after buying labour-power uses it in the work of production. The worker is compelled to sell his labour-power because he has no other way of earning his livelihood. It is this labour that produces commodities that have value—a value which is expressed in the price of the commodity.

Now the question is, at what rate does the owner of capital buy labour-power. Not arbitrarily surely, but according to certain criteria. This is the value that is absolutely necessary for the survival of the worker and his family and therefore

for the continuation of production. Marx called this the "necessary labour time."

Let us assume that the worker labours for eight hours a day. The value that he creates in four hours of work is sufficient for his subsistence. This is his wage. The remaining four hours that he works is "surplus labour time." The commodity and the value that he produces in this surplus labour time is "surplus-value." The capitalist appropriates this surplus-value, of which the worker gets nothing—he receives only his wages.

Thus "surplus-value" is the value of the unpaid labour of the worker. This "surplus-value", unpaid value appropriated by the owner in the basis of the owner's profit. "Surplus-value" gets divided into three components—capitalist's profit, landlord's rent and interest to the supplier of money who are the owners of the instruments of production. The appropriation of "surplus-value" by the capitalist class is the source both of the exploitation, wage slavery, poverty and oppression of workers and the profits, wealth and power of the owners of capital. In the secret of "surplus-value" lies the basic reason of the class struggle of the modern age.

One part of "surplus-value" gets transformed into capital and increasingly the wealth of society gets concentrated in progressively fewer hands. Thus emerges monopoly capitalism another name for which is modern imperialism. This is the economic basis of contemporary capitalist society. In the same period the use of machinery in industry steadily increases requiring greater use of science and larger numbers of skilled workers and employees. In this way capitalist production takes on a social character, and the whole world gets absorbed into the capitalist market. With the growth of monopolies, exploitation steadily increases. By enormously expanding productive forces in this manner, capitalism digs its own grave. The private ownership of the means of production is contradicted by the social character of the capitalist productive forces, and the class struggle becomes more intense. Then as Marx said, "the knell of capitalist private property is sounded. The expropriators are expropriated."

The class struggle begins because the owner of capital appropriates "surplus-value." The workers are compelled to start economic struggles against exploitation by capital, for survival, for improving living standards. They carry on long-drawn-out movements against exploitation for increasing wages reducing working hours and for other demands. They organise trade unions in factories, mines, docks and railways and become united against the owners. In this way the working class becomes a definite social force.

Initially these labour struggles were mainly economic conflicts against exploitation by owners. But workers come to realise that whenever they raise demands the entire state machinery—army, police, law courts, jails etc. is used against them to protect the interests of the owners and so they come into conflict with the state. In this way economic struggle develops into political struggle. It is through economic struggles that workers realise that strikes can win some specific concessions from capitalists (i. e. a recovery of a small part of the "surplus-value") but they cannot end capitalist exploitation or wage slavery. For that, political struggle is also necessary. The European revolutions of the nineteenth century taught this lesson to the workers.

But along with this understanding there developed two political tendencies within the working class : Right-reformist politics and revolutionary politics.

In the second half of the nineteenth century capitalism expanded rapidly in Europe and America and developed into monopoly capitalism (i.e. modern imperialism). Big industries and business concerns, banks and insurance companies, railways, ports and shipping companies arose which employed large numbers of clerks, skilled labourers and white-collar workers. Imperialists through the enormous wealth they had acquired by looting the entire world were able to give a few concessions to the workers in their own class interests—wages increased somewhat, working hours were reduced, primary education spread, trade union rights were established etc. All this of course was not the result of imperialist generosity. The working class was able to win some democratic demands

only through long struggles. However, this kind of capitalist development led to the emergence within the working class of a petit-bourgeois minded "labour aristocracy" and the growing influence of bourgeois ideology. In all countries this has been the class basis of economism, reformism and revisionism.

An American labour leader described very well the ideals of workers influenced by such petit-bourgeois ideal : "We do not have any ultimate ideal. We fight only for such immediate demands which can be obtained quickly. We want to dress a little better, live a little better and in general, become good citizens" (Lazovsky, p. 124).

Though the Social Democratic Parties of the Second International had accepted Marxism, Right-wing opportunism gradually developed among their leaders taking the ideological forms of economism and parliamentarianism. Bernstein (himself a bank clerk) was the leader of this trend. He tried to "revise" Marxism. He believed that capitalism could be ended by economic struggles alone, that socialism could be reached through peaceful reformist parliamentary legislation, that violent revolution was not necessary anywhere, nor was it possible.

The other political trend within the labour movement was Marxist revolutionary politics. The ultimate objective of this politics is proletarian revolution, seizure of state power and proletarian dictatorship. Marxists have never neglected economic and trade union movements but to them economic movements are not synonymous with economism. They are opposed to economism, not to economic struggles by workers against capitalist exploitation. Lenin, in his *What is to be Done* has shown how economism can be fought and how the workers' revolutionary consciousness can be aroused through trade union movements. In Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao there is no conflict between economic struggle and revolutionary political struggle. One complements the other. In a revolutionary situation economic struggle quickly develops into political struggle, and political struggle may be transformed into revolution (Lenin, *Left Wing Communism*, p. 26). Hence in their *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels

stated that every class struggle is a political struggle and Lenin declared *that the present class struggle is the sum total of economic and political struggles*. Lenin also stated that only he is a Marxist who accepts class struggle as the struggle to establish proletarian dictatorship (Bijon Sen, *Communist Manifesto O Shiksha*).

In this connection we have to be careful about one thing. A militant economic struggle is not necessarily revolutionary. Economists can also wage militant struggles. Under the present United Front Government in West Bengal, the strikes, gheraos, and land-grab movements by workers and peasants under the leadership of the "Marxist Party", the CPI and other Leftist Parties are all militant and violent class struggles. The political struggles waged by these parties can also be very militant. Class struggles may be waged by many groups—bourgeois liberals, revisionists, reformists, Gandhians, petit-bourgeois parties etc. At times they may become very militant too. But class struggles under their leadership, however militant, remain confined within economism and parliamentarianism. The difference between these movements and Marxist class struggle and economic struggle is that Marxists take class struggle beyond the confines of economism and transform it into revolutionary political struggle, directing it towards the destruction of capitalism, wage labour, and all forms of exploitation, towards the seizure of state power by the working class, proletarian dictatorship, and the establishment of a socialist society free from exploitation. In countries where Communist revolutionaries have been able to give leadership to the class struggles and economic movements of workers and peasants and succeeded in raising the consciousness of the toilers from militant economic struggle to the level of political seizure of state power, revolution has succeeded, as in Russia and China. Where such efforts have failed, revolutionary attempts have also failed as in India.

LENIN AND "LEFTISM"

In all class divided societies there exist social roots of not only revisionism but also of anarchism. So revisionism and anarchist or adventurist Leftist trends have arisen in the liberation movements in various forms. They still appear today and create a lot of confusion. Under certain circumstances revisionism becomes the major threat, at other times ultra Leftism becomes the main danger and opposes the revolution from within the working class itself. Hence Marxism has to fight continuously against both these tendencies. Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tse-tung have often said that every Communist has to be always cautious and carry on ideological struggle against these two trends.

As in other countries, the Russian labour movement was also considerably influenced by opportunism. Lenin built up the Bolshevik Party as the revolutionary party of the working class only through a long and bitter struggle against opportunism and it was because he did this that Lenin was able to seize state power with the help of the party and establish proletarian dictatorship.

In this context Lenin's *A Letter to a Comrade on Our Organisational Task* (1902) is a very important document. Here Lenin stated that we have to work in every industrial enterprise and teach the militant section of the workers how to lead the workers in all matters and how to attain the qualities needed for becoming members of party committees. Lenin in this article discussed in detail how to build up a secret party and labour organisations, the nature of both secret and open work, and the interconnections between labour movement, trade union and party building.

Lenin has said that the Bolshevik struggle against revisionism is well known, but very few are aware of the hard struggle the Bolshevik Party had to wage against another enemy within the working class movement. This enemy was "petit-bourgeois revolutionism", or in other words, "anarchism."

After the defeat of the Russian Revolution of 1905-07 Tsarist repression against the labour movement and Bolsheviks intensified, while inside the labour movement, too, Rightist and Leftist factions carried on anti-Bolshevik propaganda and activities. Lenin at this time had to fight both 'Liquidators' as well as Leftist "Otzovists". The Otzovists in the name of fighting Right-wing opportunism began campaigning against work in trade unions, cooperative and other mass organisations and demand the resignation of Bolshevik members of the Duma (Parliament). They argued that only a secret party was needed for revolution and indulged in violent revolutionary talk. In reality refusal to work in mass organisation means giving up the effort to establish working class leadership over the masses. The Otzovists created so much confusion among the workers and party members through such adventurist and anti-Marxist propaganda and activity that the Bolsheviks had to call a conference in 1909 which expelled them from the party and instructed party Comrades "to carry on determined struggle against all such deviations from the path of revolutionary Marxism" (*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, 1948, p. 167). At this time the Bolsheviks had to fight also against the "Left" politics of Trotsky. Trotsky's methods were more clever—acting in the name of the party, pretending to support the party, he preached anti-party ideas and, claiming to be above factions he carried on the worst kind of factional activity. Lenin's comment about Trotsky this time was: "He is loyal to the party in words but his behaviour is worse than that of the basest factionalists". Afterwards too Trotsky repeatedly endangered the Party through his incorrect "Left" politics, and the stern ideological struggle that Lenin and Stalin had to wage against him occupies an important place in the history of Marxism.

Lenin pointed out that there is no labour or trade union movement without politics. Trade unions may be of various type but they can be broadly classified into proletarian or bourgeois (revisionist and reformist). The crucial question is whether the trade unions accept the leadership of the proletarian political party, and this question is connected with

important struggle for leadership over the labour movement being waged between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The Communist Party is the highest organisational form of the working class. Only under the leadership of the party can the proletariat fight against bourgeoisie exploitation and slavery and become an independent political force. After the seizure of political power working class organisations can serve as pillars of the socialist proletarian dictatorship only under the leadership of the party.

After the First World War a tremendous revolutionary situation had emerged in Europe and particularly in the defeated countries and bourgeois rule had become very unstable. The influence of the Bolshevik revolution was spreading fast like a tidal wave. Soviet power had been established in Hungary and Bavaria, Communist Parties were emerging in all countries and workers were flocking into revolutionary struggles. In such a situation some "Left" Communist groups appeared in all countries. These "Leftists" caused enormous confusion and danger for the Communist and revolutionary labour movement through ultra-revolutionary slogans and many kinds of adventurist activities. The history of all countries shows that in such a revolutionary situation an honest but misguided petit-bourgeois group emerges which is impatient, wants revolution overnight and becomes influenced by anarchism. At the same time, the ruling class too tries to defeat the revolution from within by sending into the movement large numbers of agents disguised as revolutionaries, and such people often easily influence petit-bourgeois revolutionaries.

At this time when the European revolutionary movement was being led into such dangerous paths by adventurists spouting Marx, Lenin had to write about this in his famous *Left-wing Communism : an Infantile Disorder*. Lenin in this book analysed certain basic features of revolution and this book is by no means outdated and should be read repeatedly by Indian revolutionaries in the Indian revolutionary situation. The "Left" Communists chose as their main targets, trade unions, economic struggles, movements around day to day

demands, parliamentary elections etc. They declared all these to be "reactionary" and "reformist". They called for the boycott of trade unions, elections, mass organisation—boycott of everything. They filled the walls of city streets with slogans about revolution and the masses. They filled the air with their violent slogans. They remained indifferent towards the economic demands and grievances of the workers. They carefully kept away from the unromantic, routine organisational work through which alone the masses can prepare for revolution and through which revolutionary cadres are created.

Lenin at that time bitterly attacked such Left adventurism as "an unpardonable and dangerous error", "opportunism", "petit-bourgeois social-chauvinism". He repeatedly emphasised that revolutionaries are obliged to work wherever the masses may be, even inside very reactionary trade unions.

In this context he also declared that a revolution cannot be made to order by a handful of people selected by ourselves. Revolutionaries cannot depend on abstract human material which has developed within capitalist society and transform it in their own way. The task is very difficult but there is no other road. This applied to trade unions, the party and all other fields.

6

STALIN AND TRADE UNIONS

Stalin pointed out in an article that the first task of a Bolshevik Party had been the winning for the party the vanguard of the working class. Its second task had been to draw into the ranks of the supporters of the proletarian vanguard party, the mass of the workers and peasants. He also drew attention to the important role trade unions played in this task.

Towards the end of the civil war in the Soviet Union in 1920, when the Soviet government was beginning the work of economic reconstruction, Trotsky demanded that trade unions should be militarised. Stalin replied by emphasising the natural

democratic role of trade unions and the importance of trade unions in the building of the socialist Soviet state. Trotsky also argued at this time that politics should not be allowed to interfere with the work of trade unions in economic reconstruction. Stalin replied : "In general, to separate politics from economics is laughable and foolish".

Both Lenin and Stalin (and also later on Mao Tse-tung) realised that to establish the dictatorship of the working class the party would have to become the "decisive" force within the proletariat and the masses and to achieve this it will have to participate with responsibility in all types of struggles of mass organisations and in this way, win the respect and the faith of the masses.

The Communist Party cannot hang in a vacuum. There must be an inextricable interconnection between the masses, the working class, mass organisations and the party; one derives its life's blood from the other. Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao have all taught us this truth. Marxism does not teach us to build the party alone, ignoring mass organisations—this is petit-bourgeois anarchism.

Trotsky and other ultra-Leftists in the Soviet Union created a lot of confusion in the party by indulging in ultra-revolutionary phraseology about Soviet economic reconstruction, trade unions, peasant questions, the world revolution, the Chinese revolution, etc. Stalin had to fight always an ideological battle against these groups.

7

MAO TSE-TUNG : TRADE UNIONS AND LABOUR MOVEMENT IN CHINA

Charubabu and his associates preach in such a way about Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese revolution that it seems that the Chinese Party and ideology never did anything else but peasant revolution and guerilla warfare all its life, as if it never went anywhere near the labour and trade union movement. But Chinese history teaches us that down to 1927 the Chinese Party and particularly Mao Tse-tung laid great emphasis on building

up trade unions and directing the labour movement in order to establish proletarian leadership over the Chinese democratic revolution.

The Chinese Communist Party was established in 1921 with 57 party members and 12 delegates at the First Congress; one of them was Mao Tse-tung. Right from the beginning the Chinese Party took on the responsibility of building trade unions and leading the labour movement. In the single year 1922-23 there were a hundred strikes, big or small, involving 300,000 workers. All the strikes were under the leadership of the Party and all were victorious. Workers began joining trade unions in large numbers.

The First Party Congress sent Mao as Secretary to organise the labour and peasant movement in Hunan Province, one of China's principal revolutionary centres. A central trade union secretariat was formed with branches in the various provinces soon after the First Party Congress and Mao was appointed Chairman of the Hunan branch. The trade union movement in Hunan advanced rapidly under Mao's leadership. Twenty unions of railwaymen, miners, press employees and others were organised within a year. A number of strikes took place in Changsha, the capital of Hunan and in the famous lead mines of Saikosan. In September 1922 there was a strike of 12,000 coalminers at Anyuan, which is an important landmark in Chinese revolutionary history. Like other Chinese workers these miners were brutally exploited and had no democratic rights at all. They were kept under control by hired thugs. The Party organised schools to teach Marxism to these workers and a few months later formed the first trade union of miners. The owners stopped paying wages in order to smash the trade union, and the warlords sent in the army when the workers went on strike. But the troops, influenced by workers' propaganda, refused to open fire. Mao Tse-tung had sent Liu Shao Chi to conduct this labour movement and strike. The owners tried to arrest Liu while pretending to carry on negotiations. Thousands of workers surrounded the representatives of the mine owners, and on the fifth day of the strike, all the demands of the workers had to be conceded.

The trade union and revolutionary labour movement spread rapidly all over China under the leadership of the Communist Party. The Chinese rulers and their foreign imperialist masters were frightened. In February 1923 there was firing on striking railwaymen of the Peking-Hankow line, and 50 workers were killed and 500 injured. There was a massive popular protest and an all-China general strike. The feudal ruling class of China with the help of the imperialists began a tremendous repression on workers and peasants, but despite this the trade union and labour movement emerged even stronger within a short time.

The fourth Party Congress met at Shanghai in 1925. At that time the party membership was only 98, and the delegates to the Congress numbered 20. This Congress again emphasised the importance of the trade union movement in order to establish working class leadership in the national liberation struggle. The labour movement from now on was directed against foreign capitalists, particularly Japanese and British.

On 1 May the Second National Labour Congress met at Canton under Communist leadership and set up the All China Trade Union Federation which joined the International Red Trade Union. This Congress instructed the workers to take a more active and leading part in the national democratic revolution and regard the peasants as the main ally and support the peasant movement.

At this time the *economic and anti imperialist movements of the workers got entwined*. On 28 May 20,000 workers at a Japanese textile mill at Shanghai went on strike. On 30 May Japanese and British soldiers fired on a procession of these strikers and killed and injured many. There were countrywide protests, strikes in all cities innumerable demonstrations by workers, peasants and students. 200,000 workers of Shanghai went on an anti-imperialist strike, and the strike wave reached lakhs of workers in Canton and Hong Kong. The June strike at Hong Kong involved 250,000 workers and lasted 18 months till October 1926. There are few examples in world history of such a strike.

The Chinese Communist Party established its working class base only by organising and directing such bitter economic and

political struggles by the proletariat, and it was trying to establish proletarian leadership over the Chinese national liberation movement in this way.

As a result of the revolutionary labour movement, the influence of the Communist Party spread rapidly throughout the country and party membership multiplied. From only 900 members at the Fourth Congress in 1925 it went up to 57,000 at the Fifth Congress of April 1927. The Party at this time entirely controlled 2,800,000 organised workers and 9,000,000 organised peasants (Ho Kauchi, pp. 1552-55).

By the middle of 1926 as soon as the northern campaign started, a revolutionary upsurge began among the workers in the cities and the peasants in the villages in its support. In March 1927 when at the climax of this campaign the forces of Chiang approached Shanghai city, the heart of imperialist exploitation in China, the workers of Shanghai under Communist Party leadership paralysed the city by strikes and occupied a part of the port under Chou En-lai's leadership. The capitalists and landlords of China were panic-stricken by such revolutionary activities of the workers and peasants. On 12 April their representative Chiang Kai-shek suddenly entered the city with his troops and attacked the workers without any warning. With full support from the imperialists China started a counter revolution and established a region of white terror. The Right-wing ideas of the Party leadership were a primary reason for the defeat of the revolution.

It was through this mass struggle that the Chinese Communist Party realised that it was impossible to defeat the armed forces of reaction without armed, powerful revolutionary forces. It is also true that because the Party led a broad mass struggle that it was able to build up powerful armed forces so quickly.

The Communist Party learnt another lesson from this struggle — if the working class has to perform the role of the leader it must establish an alliance with the peasants and petit-bourgeois elements.

Two contrary trends of thinking emerged within the

Chinese Communist Party over these questions — one was the Bolshevik thinking under Mao's leadership and the other was the Menshevik thinking under Chen Tu-hsien.

Among Chinese Communist leaders at that time only Mao had started to realise through his experiences in the Hunan peasant masses under the leadership of the working class. Mao's *Hunan Report* written at this time is a path finding document in the Communist movement.

After the defeat of the 1848 revolution in France and Germany and again after the fall of the Paris Commune, Marx and Engels drew the attention of Marxists towards the role of peasants in revolution. On its basis Lenin and Stalin later established the theory of worker-peasant alliance under working-class leadership. On the firm ground prepared by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, Mao further enriched the theory of the revolutionary role of the peasantry under working class leadership in colonial and semi-colonial countries through its application in the Chinese revolution

The establishment of worker-peasant alliance under working-class leadership and through revolutionary struggle, the establishment of new democracy under the dictatorship of the worker and the peasant and then passing on to socialism—these are the basic lessons of the Chinese revolution under Mao's leadership.

In 1927 Chiang Kai-shek reached a compromise with imperialism, betrayed the national liberation movement and declared war against Communists. Communists had not yet built up their own armed forces. Chiang wanted to take advantage of this and totally destroy the Communists who had been able to forge close links with workers and masses.

Communists began to build up troops with workers and peasants and attack the forces of reaction wherever possible. In August at Nanchang, the provincial capital of Kiangsi, Chou En-lai fought against Chiang with troops composed of workers and peasants like Chu Teh, Ho Lung, Yeh Ting, and others. In September the Autumn Harvest Uprising took place under Mao's leadership. The Province of Hunan was the Centre of this uprising. At this time Mao built his first

regiment of troops with the famous coalminers of Anynan ("The first regiment was formed from the Anynan miners", Snow : *Red Star Over China*, p. 163). After a short while the Red Army was formed with some other regiments and it was called "the first division of the first armed regiment of the workers and peasants". The troops were composed of elements like (1) coalminers and other labourers from Anynan, (2) selected peasants from the Hunan Peasant Association, (3) rebellious soldiers from the Kuomintang.

After a few battles Mao occupied the Chinggang mountains in October and established the first revolutionary centre there. Within a short time Lin Piao and Chen Yi with the peasant guerilla troops came to join Mao. Divisions of lead miners of Shui Kosan in Hunan province also joined Mao.

On 11 December 1927 there was a workers' upheaval in Canton. Workers founded a commune after occupying the city but the revolutionaries were defeated. The Canton commune proved the power of the enemy when the latter got all sorts of support from imperialists and it also showed that as long as the revolutionary armed forces are not well organised, it was not possible to occupy any big city. The survivors from the Canton Commune also joined Mao on the Chinggang mountain. From 1928 began the second phase in the Chinese revolutions—the phase of peasant revolution under Mao Tse-tung's leadership.

But this peasant revolution did not include only peasants. Its most important aspect was working-class leadership and this leadership did not mean just the ideology of the working class but the physical presence of this class as well. In the Chinese Party, both among leaders and the cadres, petit-bourgeois elements were fairly strong. This is inevitable in all colonial and semi-colonial countries. Peasants are basically petit-bourgeois and their aim is to own land. In this situation if there is no powerful working-class leadership existing both ideologically and physically, then there are strong chances of deviation in the leadership of the peasant revolution and the trend towards petit-bourgeois revolutionism becomes powerful (and, in fact, this happened in China). That is why from the

beginning of the peasant revolution, Mao emphasised equally the ideological and physical aspects of working-class leadership.

8

MAO TSE-TUNG AND PETIT-BOURGEOIS REVOLUTIONISM

Upto 1928 the leadership of the Chinese Party was in the hands of Right-wing opportunists like Chen Tu-hsien. Which class was to provide leadership in the democratic revolution in China—on this fundamental question Chen argued that the bourgeoisie and not the working class ought to lead. The Right-wing leadership did not think in terms of worker-peasant alliance, it laid stress on cooperation with the Kuomintang. Such Right-wing ideas of the Party leadership was the primary reason for the defeat of the 1928 revolution. At that time the "Leftists" within the Communist Party under the leadership of Kuo Tao talked only of workers' movements and they too had no faith in the revolutionary role of the peasantry.

In this situation Mao, in his *Analysis of Classes in Chinese Society*, said that the working class was the leader of this revolution which was to take place on the basis of worker-peasant alliance. Although Mao was then a member of the Central Committee, Chen refused to publish the booklet in the name of the Committee. The Party leadership had also paid no attention to Mao's *Hunan Report*. During his movement and organisational work among the Hunan peasants, Mao realised the tremendous revolutionary force of the peasantry and in his *Hunan Report* he had suggested a new revolutionary principle and programme about the peasants to the Party. This was: accept the revolutionary role of the peasants in the Chinese revolution, establish the political power of the peasants in the villages as soon as possible and build up armed forces of peasants.

It was because Mao was able to build up a powerful party and establish worker-peasant alliance under working-class leadership by following these fundamental tenets of Marxism-

Leninism and by waging a long drawn out ideological battle against Right-wing and ultra-Leftist tendencies, that the Chinese masses could completely eliminate imperialist feudalism and bureaucratic exploitation and rule in China.

After the defeat of the 1927 revolution Chen Tu-hsien was expelled from the Party for not admitting his blunder. The Party accepted the principle of peasant revolution and resisting the Kuomintang, but still it did not move in the right direction—it left the Rightist path only to go over to ultra-“Leftism”. “Inspired by hatred at the massacre by the Kuomintang and anger at the surrender of Chen Tu-hsien, petit-bourgeois sentiments entered the Party and ‘Leftist’ thinking spread rapidly within the Party” (Mao, III, p. 181).

In the Sixth Party Congress in 1928 some mistakes were rectified but the “Leftist” trend still remained very strong. Within two years this trend began to dominate the Party under Li-Li San’s leadership. In the meantime after the first revolutionary centre had been established on the Chingkang mountain under Mao, many other strong revolutionary centres and Soviets had been formed in large areas of different provinces by 1930 and the strength of the Red Army had reached one lakh.

At this time a strong adventurist tendency manifested itself within the Red Army. This was Putschism (that is “the principle of blind attacks irrespective of mental and actual conditions”—Mao, I, p. 115 and *Roving Rebel Bands*). Mao then had to fight severely against this dangerous “Leftist” tendency.

In the meantime the Communist Party again started crystallising illegally within the territory ruled by Chiang and there was a revival in trade unions and labour movement. At this time a war broke out between Chiang and some warlords and this gave a handle to the Communists.

In this situation Li Li-san popularised an adventurist line inside the Party. He said that the revolution was about to break out throughout the world (at that time the capitalist

countries were going through an intense economic crisis) and that the revolution would begin in China. The entire masses were restive under Chiang's despotism. If a call for revolution was to be sent out, they would join in the armed uprising and as soon as the revolution would start, the Chinese Communist Party would capture state power. Li also said that the big cities and not the countryside were the centre of the Chinese revolution. So the task of forming Soviets in the rural areas should be suspended, the Red Army should attack the cities, and foreign imperialism as well as the bourgeoisie would have to be destroyed through the armed uprising of the workers. Li ignored the fact of uneven development within the country and declared that an equally revolutionary situation was present in all cities and villages.

Followers of Li denied the necessity of accumulating organisational energy and complete the preparation for the revolution. They thought that since revolutionary forces were progressing and the warlords were fighting among themselves, therefore the situation was ripe for a countrywide call for revolution. They assumed that as soon as the Party gives the call for the revolution, the masses will join the armed uprising. They demanded that the masses should not go in for economic strikes but only for armed uprising and that they should not take any part in small "actions" but only in big ones (Ho Kan-chih : *A History of Modern Chinese Revolution*).

(What a strange similarity exists between the thoughts of Li Li-san and the thoughts of Comrade Charu Mazumdar ! Since there is a revolutionary situation in the country, go in for "actions". There is no need for preparations as the masses will respond, inspired by our "actions" and the spark will automatically become a conflagration ! Even before, this had happened under Ranadive.)

The first thing about the revolution is to mobilise its organisational forces through correct ideas—or, in other words preparations. It is adventurism to give a call for revolution without any preparation. Such a trend is particularly strong among petit-bourgeois revolutionaries. (On the other hand,

the revolutionary preparations that revisionists talk of—such as the Promode-Jyoti-Harekrishna-Ranadive-Vasavapunnaiya clique—is sheer fraud. Their politics of parliamentarianism and economism is the exact opposite of revolutionary preparations. There is no end to their preparations—they are preparing for the last forty years. Their preparations go in the direction of Fascism, not towards working-class revolution and socialism. As a reaction to this eternal preparing Charubabu and others have gone over to the other extreme. They think that there is no need for preparations.)

Mao's line to counter Li's adventurism was—"Over a long period we shall have to concentrate our basic strength in building up base areas in the countryside. Then these bases will have to be used for surrounding the cities and for unleashing the tidal forces of a countrywide revolution" (Mao, p. 148). At that time the followers of Li had criticised Mao's line as "Rightist deviation." What was even more dangerous was the fact that Li's Leftist adventurist ideas had also influenced a portion of the Red Army.

Following Li's suicidal policy, some crazy campaigns were defeated and the Party suffered very heavily. Li had to face severe criticism from the Party cadres. Within four months the Party had dropped this line but still Leftist sectarianism survived within the Party and its leadership. In December 1930 Chiang began his "surround and destroy" operations to crush the liberated areas of China and the Red Army. Mao defeated him by adopting the correct policy.

Wang-Ming, Po-Ku (Chin Pang-hsien) and others now came back from Moscow where they had been staying all this time and occupied positions of leadership. They had not been able to assimilate Marxism but they had learnt a lot of revolutionary phraseology. Also, they had little knowledge about the real conditions within the country.

The very first theory forwarded by them stated that Li Li-san's ideas were not Leftist but actually Rightist and such Rightist and such Rightism is the enemy of the party. Having said this, the line that they proposed was for more Leftist than Li's, far more dangerous, violently revolutionary, dra-

matic and "theoretical". It is easy to preach such adventurist revolutionism in a revolutionary situation when petit-bourgeois revolutionaries come under its sway. Marxist-Leninists find it very difficult to fight against this tide.

At that time, Japan had occupied Manchuria (19 September, 1931) and this was Japan's first step towards occupying all of China. Due to this event, there occurred a qualitative change in the Chinese situation. Instead of civil war, Mao advocated the policy of a united front with the Kuomintang against Japanese aggression. Leftist leaders opposed this and stated that Chiang would have to be removed first in order to resist Japan. They underestimated Chiang's power and claimed that he could be destroyed by a hard blow. They reversed Mao's military principles and tactics as they argued that these constituted the "rich peasant line" and "serious Rightist opportunism". Like Li they too said that instead of guerilla warfare, preparations should be started for an all out attack on the main enemy base—the cities. The Leftist line about areas under Chiang and the Kuomintang was even more dangerous. So far the Party had combined with its secret work, legal and open work wherever it was possible to spread the Party's influence on the masses. Leftist leaders declared that taking advantage of laws was a variant of opportunism. So the Central Committee of the Party was located in the Kuomintang area. But due to the adventurist policy of the Leftist leaders, the Central Committee had to be shifted secretly to the Soviet area.

The booklet that Wang-Ming wrote at this time to explain this new Leftist policy had a very significant title—'The Two Lines or the Struggle for the Further Bolshevization of the CPC.' This was a trick to inject Bakuninite and Trotskyite adventurism into the communist movement in the name of Bolshevism.

When in October 1933 Chiang with a lot of help from the imperialists and with ten lakh soldiers started his fifth campaign to "surround and destroy" the Communists, the disastrous results of the adventurist policy of Leftist leaders

of the Party became obvious. Mao, who had been able to defeat four "surround and destroy" campaigns so far was now set aside by the Leftist leaders who now assumed responsibility for directing the war themselves. They abandoned Mao's guerilla and mobile warfare tactics and went in for positional warfare and defensive tactics. Although the Red Army did win a few battles, they were defeated in most cases, Chiang began gradually occupying their bases and it became impossible to defend their main base and Soviet area in Kiangsi. Only one lakh remained out of a total of three lakhs in the Red Army. In this situation, in October 1934, the decision was taken under Mao's leadership to leave Kiangsi and undertake the "long march" over 12,000 Kilometres.

On 6 January 1935, during this "long march", the Red Army occupied the Tsunyi city and there at a special session of the Party Polit Bureau the Leftist leadership was made to resign. Mao Tse-tung was elected to highest leadership and his policy was accepted.

China's Party history teaches us that Rightist thinking, Leftist adventurism and petit-bourgeois revolutionism were responsible for repeated deviations from the correct Marxist-Leninist policy and they endangered the existence of the revolution. For fifteen years Mao had to stand on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and through ceaseless revolutionary work and severe ideological fighting had to combat those two dangerous trends. It was through this long-drawn out conflict over theory and practice that Marxism-Leninism and Mao's Thought could be consolidated.

9

COMRADE CHARU MAZUMDAR AND TRADE UNION

Charubabu has created tremendous confusion among Communist revolutionaries by his numerous, contradictory statements about economic struggle. He would say at one that: "If one agrees that a revolutionary situation exists in India, one also has to agree that the task in today's India is to build up a secret revolutionary party and not *mass organisation*. It is this secret party organisation that

will lead the class struggle. We must remember the words of the Chairman : "Never forget about class struggle". We will not remain within mass organisations like trade unions, peasant Samitis etc. through which the people wage their mass struggle (since if we remain there, we will be ensnared by revisionism !) but do not forget class struggle. We shall only build a secret party—"This secret party organisation will lead the class struggle !" Do not go into mass organisations, do not take any responsibility for the day-to-day struggle of the masses but simply preach class struggle among them, build a secret party and start guerilla warfare—and the masses will join us.

Guerilla warfare is an advanced level of class struggle and it is puerile to think of reaching this more advanced stage through by-passing lower stages. This does not mean that guerilla warfare should not be started where the situation is ripe for it. Certainly it should be started there. But to strengthen those wars, to achieve victory for them it is necessary to have countrywide powerful democratic movements in their support and economic as well as political struggle. Lenin, Stalin and Mao have said again and again that not thousands or lakhs but millions of people must actively strive to make the revolution successful. Mass organisations of workers, peasants and students are essential for mobilising the vast masses and the task of revolutionaries is to assume responsibility for directing these mass organisations. That is why Mao commanded : "Build up firmly class based trade unions". The "revolutionary" party that Charubabu talks of in utter disregard for such lessons, is certainly not a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary party, whatever else it may be.

It is crass irresponsibility to say that we shall not engage in economic struggle, trade unions, Krishak Samitis in a country like India where most workers peasants do not get even one square meal a day and no education, where economic struggle is so necessary because capitalists, landlords, jotedars and moneylenders so openly and massively exploit the masses. Snobbery about such things

is a characteristic of petit-bourgeois revolutionaries in all countries.

After having said that mass organisations and trade unions will be avoided, Charubabu suddenly came out with : "We shall not engage in movements for economic demands but we do not say that political propaganda and political party formation is not our first and main task" (*Deshabrati*, 4 September 1969).

This is another example of Charubabu's many self-contradictory statements. He will not go in to mass organisations or trade unions, but how then is he to organise an economic struggle in the vacuum ? Charubabu sees economic and political struggles as two separate and contradictory aspects : he does not see that the two are inextricably joined together and mutually interlinked. This is eclectic thinking and eclecticism is always opportunist and anti-Marxist.

No doubt that as in other capitalist countries, in India too most trade unions are under the control of some corrupt, economist, opportunist, revisionists. These trade union leaders believe in class cooperation and are agents of the owners. To say that the revolutionary party will not engage in trade unions is tantamount to escaping from the battlefield with the entire working class left to the wolves. A more serious problem is that the Indian working class is divided up into a number of conflicting unions. What does this situation in the trade unions prove ? It proves that the impact of revolutionaries on the working class is very limited. If this is the condition of the working class, then how is the working class to lead the peasant movement in the national liberation movement ? (Of course, Charubabu seldom talks of working-class leadership as he does not believe in it, still, it looks bad if he does not occasionally refer to it, so he does his duty by a few ritual mentions.)

Indian trade unions had developed in a militant manner and the heritage of the revolutionary struggle of the Indian working class is quite substantial. As an example, we may consider the historic labour movement of 1928. A strike wave spread all over India and five lakh workers from the big

industries of those days joined it. Workers from Bombay, Nagpur and Sholapur Cotton Mills, Calcutta Jute Mills, the Tata Iron & Steel Works at Jamshedpur, the East India Railway, Calcutta Corporation, Lillooah Railway Workshop and many other industries from one end of the country to another joined the strike. In Bombay one and half lakh workers of the Girni Kamgar Union under Communist leadership continued the strike for six months against the exploitation by Indian and British capitalists in the cotton textile mills despite the savage repression and lathi charge by the police and the army. (Due to the revisionist policy of the leaders, that revolutionary Girni Kamgar Union in Bombay which used to be the centre of activities of all-India leaders like Ranadive-Dange-Adhikari and Mirajkar is now the centre of violent, fascist operations of the Shivsena.) In this context we should also mention the eight month long strike of the Lillooah railway workers and the six month long strike at Bauria and some other jute mills. Muniram and some other labour leaders of Lillooah were given ten year prison sentences (Bijon Sen, "Bharater Communist Partir Ruprekha," *Kalpurush*, Nos. 4-5, 1969).

It was in 1928 that the Comintern gave the following instructions to the CPI—(1) working class and peasant leadership in the anti-imperialist struggle will have to be strengthened and unified, (2) the Communist Party must be strengthened (3) the masses should be liberated from reformism and bourgeois influence, (4) trade union work must be emphasised. "The essential task of Indian Communists in organising trade unions of workers are (a) to expose the real nature of the national reformist leadership marcilessly, (b) to drive out reformists from trade unions in order to buld them up as the true class organisation of the workers and in their place to take in revolutionary representavives with firm determination from among the working masses."

The Indian Party never obeyed these instructions, either then or now. Even Charubabu now considers these instructions to be dated.

But just at that time, following this Marxist policy, Mao

was forming the Red Army with Communists and under working-class leadership on the Ching Kang mountains and establishing Soviet liberated areas.

Even at later times, waves of militant labour movement had swept over India. At Sholapur, workers had even set up a commune but due to the betrayal of the revisionist leadership such movements never achieved fruition. Muzaffar Ahmed once came out with a significant statement about the 1928 labour movement and its revolutionary potentialities : "In 1928 a wonderful opportunity had arrived to transform the CPI into a powerful Communist Party through a workers' (!!!) struggle. A vast number of workers (!!!) had the chance to join the Party. Workers (!!!) had become conscious about the political party on account of the speeches during the strikes. At that time our influence had reached even the ordinary labouring masses. *If we had strated work then, a large number from their ranks would have joined our Party*" (*Communist Party Garar Pratham Yug*, p. 32).

Just as that "work", the work of bringing a large number of revolutionary workers into the Party, had not been done "then", at later times too it was not done after Muzaffar Ahmed and others built up the "Marxist" Party. Both the CPI and CPM leaders deliberately did not take in revolutionary workers into their Parties. As a result, the two Parties had become petit-bourgeois and Kulak parties. The CPI (M-L) formed by Comrade Charu Mazumder too has very few worker revolutionaries. He has repeatedly stated that he was going to have a village-based party with "poor and landless peasants". Therefore he would not engage in mass organisations or trade unions—this is the natural result of his anarchist political outlook.

Charubabu is raising the slogan innumerable times—"Do not forget the mass line." Do not engage in trade unions, peasant Samitis or any form of mass organisation but engage in class struggle, apply the mass line ! We do not have the key to the magic as to how one can have class struggle without mass organisation.

Another slogan of Charubabu is—"Serve the masses".

What does that mean?—Massaging their limbs? He has never explained anywhere as to how one can serve the masses. It is just an empty phrase with him as “engage in class struggle” is. Mao has talked of serving the people but in his opinion that means participating in their day-to-day struggle, to wage economic struggle, to provide for education through which political consciousness can reach a higher level. Charubabu has no faith in any of this. He just wants the formation of a secret party and guerilla warfare.

In explaining why they do not engage in trade union work Charubabu and his associates argue that at the time of Marx, Lenin and Stalin the trade unions were necessary as an elementary class association and centre for education. But there is no longer any such need. Now trade unions are old fashioned, they have turned into their “opposites” as bases of reaction, capitalists are using them as their weapons, they are working against working class interests and so on. They entirely ignore the fact that trade union matters there is a big divergence between the aims of revisionist union leaders and the aims of ordinary workers within the union.

Such anti-Marxist-Leninist and anti-Maoist ideology has been beautifully expressed in the writings of an Australian revolutionary and this piece has been published in both *Liberation* (Aug '69) and *Deshabrati* of Charubabu's group. The author says : “In Australia trade unions and parliamentary politics are the two main obstacles that are responsible for the working class and other labourers' deviation from the path of revolution ..30 lakh Australian workers are members of these trade unions...This gives rise to the notion that trade unions and parliamentary politics can lead to social change through constitutional means. (What an awful discovery !!!)...Today capitalists need such trade unions. These constitute a burden for the working class and we do not want to add to it.” Then he advises avoiding trade unions and engaging in revolutionary politics. “Our task is not to strengthen trade union organisations for this strengthens the capitalists rather than the working class. Our task is to smash the trade unions through Marxism-Leninism and the Thought

of Mao." The idea is that workers should boycott trade unions but at the same time trade union bureaucracy has also to be destroyed, that is all very well, but how is this to be done? By hitting the bureaucrats on the head from outside? The second question is; after getting rid of the bureaucrats what happens to the trade unions? Should they be smashed up as well? There is no reply to these real questions. This is an example of Bakuninite, negative, petit-bourgeois revolutionism. And such anarchist ideas are being circulated in the name of Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao!

Liberation and *Deshabrati* had taken this Australian article from the journal *World Revolution*. This journal had published another article side by side with the Australian one. The latter criticised trade union work, while the former was written by the Ceylonese Party leader Comrade Sammugnathasan in support of trade unions. *World Revolution* was correct in publishing both views as both exist among revolutionaries of different countries and both badly require discussion. *Deshabrati* and *Liberation* had previously published many articles by Sammugnathasan but it did not publish this one. They have also published many articles from *PL* (*Progressive Labour*), the journal of American revolutionaries, but not those on trade union programmes or to the reply to the Australian article. *Deshabrati* did not publish Lindar's reply to the Australian article which appeared in the *PL* (*Laljhanda's* 7th and 8th issues came out with Lindar's article). The reason for this surely is that Charubabu's group is unwilling to enter into any polemics about ideology and they want to impose their opinion on the comrades in a bureaucratic manner. This bureaucratic manner is evident in their handling of peasants', workers' and as well as students' organisations.

Even on a crucial question like the elections, we found the same bureaucratic note. There were two groups of opinion among Indian revolutionaries on that question—one was in favour of election boycott and the other supported participation in elections. Marxists have used both tactics,

choosing either of them at times according to the circumstances. Lenin had boycotted elections in one situation and in a different situation, had taken part in it. This is the correct way, since Marxists should make concrete analysis of a concrete situation and then decide on their tactics. And here we find ideological conflict among Marxists. Opportunity has to be provided for a discussion of both the views, comrades have to discuss both at every level and then take a decision. But the Coordination Committee did not do so. The boycott decision was imposed in a bureaucratic manner from above and leaders also used many dishonest devices to enforce this decision. The article that Stalin once wrote in support of election boycott in Russia appeared in the *Deshabrati*, but it remained silent about all the later articles that he had written advocating participation in elections. Is this not extreme opportunism ?

There is another issue. What does the statement mean that "there was a need for trade union in Marx's time but there is none today" ? Does this not mean that the capitalism that existed in Marx's time has ceased to exist today and capitalist exploitation, too, is at an end ? Does this not ask us to revise Marxism ?

They have also discovered another startling "argument". "We are now at the stage of mass war, not at the stage of ordinary mass struggle." (Satyanarayan Sinha, *Deshabrati*. 28 August, 1959). Charubabu's group no longer sees any difference between economic struggle (trade union) and revisionism. That is why Sinha roars that he will never allow us "to direct present armed struggles in India along the old blind alley of economic struggle". Our humble question to the violent revolutionary Comrade Sinha (as well as to Charubabu) is : Are you the first to engage in armed struggle in this world ? Had Marx never heard of armed struggle ? Did Lenin, Stalin or Mao never engage in it ? Not only did they engage in it but they were also victorious. They could be victorious mainly because of the fact that as soon as they entered the "old" mass organisations, they had followed the Marxist revolutionary policy of economic

and political struggles and also had fought against revisionism and opportunism. That is why a fundamental lesson of Marxism is that the working class cannot be detached from democratic and economic struggle and then put to the service of the revolutionary movement. Lenin had said in his *Left Wing Communism* that the first task of the party is to "initiate the vanguard of the working class in Communism" and that its second task is to bring over the vast masses of workers and peasants to the side of this vanguard, the Party. Lenin, Stalin and Mao had proved that the only way to do this was to work through mass organisations. Has the situation in India changed so radically, has capitalism disappeared from India that the lessons taught by Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao about class struggle and workers' revolution have become old fashioned and invalidated?

Charubabu's group talks all the time about the fight against revisionism. But where is this fight to take place? Should this significant battle be waged through phrase-mongering, or should it be extended to all those spheres where revisionists influence the vast masses by their reactionary ideas—that is, to trade unions, to peasant Samitis and to students' unions? Have not Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao repeatedly instructed us that we have to work wherever these vast masses are present? Did Mao Tse-tung not instruct Chinese revolutionaries that work must be done among "yellow" trade unions even in areas of white terror under Chiang, making use of whatever legal scope was offered there? Whether within the unions or outside them, if a day-to-day ideological struggle against revisionist labour leaders can be waged through work then the working class will become aware of their longterm objectives and will become conscious.

Certainly there is the danger that excessive involvement in day-to-day trade union work may lead to the possibility of neglecting politics, of thinking exclusively in terms of trade union struggle, or becoming a part of capitalist corruption. Communist revolutionaries must be careful about such dangers and consciously fight them. On the other hand, such work provides enough scope for learning from the workers, to take

Marxism-Leninism and the Thoughts of Mao to them and to earn the experience of waging class struggle against the exploitation of owners. So one cannot argue that trade union work should be avoided because of the risks that go with it. Sell-out is not inevitable if one takes part in struggles for immediate economic demands of trade unions. If that had been the case then the teachings of Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao would have been proved wrong. The Russian and Chinese revolutions have proved the validity of Marxism-Leninism.

When Mao was engaged in armed struggle against Chiang in the revolutionary situation in China and was establishing liberated zones and revolutionary bases, he sent out a call to strengthen the countrywide democratic movement : "It is now necessary to start a political and economic struggle in the interests of democracy and in order to make the powerful revolutionary tide sweep over the whole country" (*Struggle in the Ching Kang Mountain*, 1928, Vol-I, p. 99).

And Charubabu says : "If one acknowledges the existence of a revolutionary situation in India, one also has to accept that the task of today is to build up a revolutionary party organisation, and not a mass organisation."

There is a fundamental difference in the two points of view—one is the Marxist viewpoint of the working class and the other is the anarchist point of view of the petit-bourgeoisie.

10

THE REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS "FROM OUTSIDE" OF CHARU MAZUMDAR

Charubabu's group says : "The working class will never realise the necessity of peasant revolution through its movement for economic demands. It must be taught this necessity from outside the trade unions. For this we need revolutionary worker cadres who are trained in political education and the Thought of the Chairman. Such cadres are prepared through the organisation of the secret party" (*Comradeder Prati O Anyanya Rachana*, p. 39).

Such statements may sound quite revolutionary but they constitute petit-bourgeois revolutionism, not Marxism-Leninism. At the start of the revolutionary movement in Russia and during the first phase of the Bolshevik Party building, Lenin had discussed in his book *What is to be Done* (1902) the process of taking revolutionary theory and consciousness "from outside" to the labour movement. Charubabu has distorted this famous statement in order to establish a anti-Leninist theory.

At that time the trend towards economism and revisionism in labour and socialist movements had become powerful in Russia as in European capitalist countries. Lenin had then stated that an exclusive and perfect trade union or economic movement does not give birth to revolutionary theory. Revolutionary theory, that is, the theory of working-class revolution, of the seizure of state power, of the establishment of proletarian dictatorship, has to be brought to the working class from outside. One has to stay with them too, to share in the day-to-day struggles and assume responsibility for them; and through these means the spontaneous economic, trade unionist consciousness of the workers has to be transformed into revolutionary consciousness and the genuine trade union movement. It is in this way that worker cadres will assimilate revolutionary theory and prepare themselves for leading the working-class revolution.

Lenin had stated in this context: "No revolutionary movement can exist without a revolutionary theory." We see in the history of most countries that at the first stages of the labour movement, the movement and socialist theory develop separately and independently. But that cannot remain separate for very long as one cannot progress very far without the other. The task of revolutionary Marxists is to inextricably bind together the socialist movement and the spontaneous labour movement (economic movement). It is through the mutual relationship between theory and practice that the working class leadership in the democratic and socialist revolution emerges in our time.

It happened in this manner not only in Europe but also

in Asia. "In China Marxism-Leninism first spread extensively among primarily intellectuals and young students" (Mao, Vol. II, p. 322). In India too, revolutionary intellectuals were the first to accept Marxism-Leninism and they began to take it to the working class.

Lenin had also stated in this context that trade unions and labour movements develop on the basis of the relationship between the worker and the owner, whereas socialism and revolutionary theory develop on the basis of the relations between the classes and the state, government as well as the mutual relationship among the classes. In reply to the question as to what is to be done at the first stage of the Russian labour movement he had said that the revolutionary theory had to be carried to all classes. The revolutionaries "must go among all classes of population, they must despatch units of their army in all directions" (Ibid, p. 422).

Lenin had said that revolutionary theory had to be brought to the workers "from outside" but he never said that workers would be told some revolutionary statement and then the revolutionaries will leave them and again come back, or that they should simply play hide and seek with the workers and "only" engage in building the revolutionary party. In fact he had said just the opposite—that they should come "from outside" but then stay on with the workers, building up a revolutionary "core" from among them. This was done in Russia by the Emancipation Group and the Bolshevik Party and in China the Party also did the same. It was mainly because of this that the revolution had succeeded in Russia and China. In India this was never done at all, and as a result there had been no revolution. Revolution is dependent on cause and effect, it does not happen spontaneously.

When Lenin wrote *What is to be Done*, Russia was at the first stage of the revolutionary labour movement and work was progressing spontaneously through class struggle, strikes etc. and the task of Bolshevik Party building had just started. The entire country was going through a revolutionary phase and within a few years a revolution did take place there. When the people were spontaneously advancing towards the revolution,

the revolutionaries were lagging behind in theory and organisation. Lenin had then said that the more the mass and labour movement would progress spontaneously, the more the revolutionaries should concentrate on their task of building up their organisations, and guiding them. If they do not do so, then they will lose their movement and organisations to the influence of the bourgeoisie. That is why Lenin had said that revolutionary theory must be brought from outside by the revolutionaries who then should merge themselves with the workers and carry on organisational activities ceaselessly and permanently. It is in this manner that the revolutionary theory of socialism would come to belong to the working class and the theory itself will be further enriched through the experience of the labour movement.

Therefore "the worker will have to be taught the politics of peasant revolutions from outside the trade union movement ...the task of today in India is to build up the secret party organisation and not mass organisation" — such a theory of Charubabu is totally opposed to Marxism-Leninism. Such politics "from outside" is the sectarian "Leftist" politics of petit-bourgeois revolutionism, the theory of Bakunin's anarchism.

Who is going to explain the theory of peasant revolution "from outside" to the workers? Comrade Charu Mazumdar says in reply: "For that we need revolutionary working class cadres trained in political education and the Thought of the Chairman and such cadres are prepared only through the secret party organisation." This is sheer petit-bourgeois romanticism. We have to ask—where is the revolutionary working class cadre to come from? Will they fall from the skies or will they come, tested and prepared, to working-class struggle, workers' organisation, etc.? It is through the spontaneous struggles of the working class that a vanguard is set up. If it is trained then this vanguard can provide cadres for the secret or the open Communist Party and organise working-class leadership. Charubabu considers revolutionary theory to be the alternative to class struggle and not its

complementary aspect. Thus the theory that he establishes may sound extremely revolutionary but it actually puts the cart before the horse. The progress of revolution stops if it follows the direction of this theory. Revolutionaries are isolated from the people and ultimately they have to take the path of terrorism.

We shall not go in for economic struggle, for mass struggle, we shall only engage in the revolution and set up a secret party — this trend used to exist in Russia as well. It did not escape Lenin's notice that in one field there was a similarity between revolutionaries of this sort and counter-revolutionary economists. He did not hesitate to lash out against them.

Charubabu has supplied an amazing argument to prove how dangerously reactionary trade unions and other mass organisations are. He says : "Those who work in trade unions have experienced that the workers used to come to the Communist leaders when it was a question of winning economic demands but they used to vote for the Congress during elections". What fantastic revolutionism ! Where Marx, Engels Stalin and Mao had boundless faith and trust in the revolutionary force of the working class, Charubabu has such extraordinary contempt, hatred and lack of trust for the workers. This is not surprising as the instinctive hatred and disbelief of Bakuninite Anarchist, petit-bourgeois revolutionaries towards the working class is beautifully revealed in Charubabu's thinking. The mistake is theirs, but we lay the blame at the door of the working class. Marx never said that the workers are ignorant, they do not understand politics or anything beyond their day to day grievances—these are Bakunin's words.

Charubabu has also said : "We know that when we were suffering most from revisionism, we had set up many mass organisations and established party units among them. But we had used the party units to complement our trade union activities and therefore we had failed to draw the working class into our politics".

Charubabu has perfectly realised that revisionism was responsible for our past mistakes in our work in trade unions,

peasant movements and other mass organisations. What then is the remedy? That will be to get rid of revisionism and to take the politics of peasant revolution under working-class leadership to the masses through their organisations. But Charubabu says : "No, mass organisations are useless. We should only set up the secret party ! This secret party will reach the message of peasant revolution to the workers 'from outside'."

Charubabu considers trade unions and all other mass organisations as revisionist and therefore to be avoided on principle. So far so good. But immediately after this he asks : "If everyone is preoccupied with setting up mass organisations then who is to work for organising the secret party ? Can mass organisations accomplish the peasant revolution ?" So this becomes a tactical, and not an ideological issue. The number of our comrades is limited, so should they work in mass organisations, or just in the secret party ? This is sheer opportunism of a petit-bourgeois revolutionary to confuse ideological issues with tactical issues. Again Charubabu thinks that the working of party-building in secret and the work in mass organisation are two different even contradictory alternatives. But there is no place for such notions in Marxism-Leninism or the Thought of Mao, although this is the most important characteristic of Charubabu's politics.

The amount of hatred that the leaders of Charubabu's Party have for trade unions, mass organisations etc. is often expressed in their organ *Deshabrati*. One such example is : "Truly, who else remains in the party ? Only those remain who are just talking of peasants and revolutionary peasant war as well as guiding it while those who leave the party are those who have devoted themselves, body and soul, to make trade unions blossom with revolutionary cadres " (31 July, 1969).

It is the aim of the working-class and its Communist Party to seize state power, to demolish the administrative machinery of the exploiting class and to set up dictatorship of the proletariat. It is possible to reach this goal only through armed struggle and not through the parliamentary politics of revisionism. The peoples' war is the final phase of class struggle and

revolution is its climax. The greatest task of the Communist Party is to prepare the working class organisationally and ideologically so that it can lead this revolution. In the present context of world revolution, the working class cannot afford to restrict itself to its own class organisation, it has also to organise the peasant revolution. It is not possible for a petit-bourgeois revolutionist party to perform this crucial task—only the party of the working class, firmly rooted in Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao can do this.

The more the crisis of capitalism and its state machinery deepens and the mass movement becomes militant, the more the working class realises that it is not able to advance at all without armed forces. The revolutionary politics of the working-class takes it towards armed struggle and forces it to become organised. The peasants too, advance towards armed struggle through their own experience of class struggle. Only the working class guided by the revolutionary Communist Party is capable of performing the great and difficult task of building up armed forces, for this class is the class which is most conscious, militant, well organised and experienced in class struggle. The fundamental power behind the armed forces has to be the working class naturally. Peasants will supply the main force and the revolutionary working class and its Communist Party will direct them. This lesson is valid for all semi-colonial and semi-feudal countries. So Charubabu fully opposes the teachings of Mao when he talks of "peasant leadership" or says that "Our party will have to base itself primarily among the peasants". Instead of directly opposing it he continually spreads anti-Mao theory in the name of the Chairman. The theory that he spreads is the guerilla theory of Che Guevara.

11

COMRADE CHARU MAZUMDAR AND THE THEORY OF "PEASANT REVOLUTION"

We saw in the previous chapter that Charubabu's thinking about workers' movement is entirely opposed to Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao. Now let us examine what

his ideas are about "peasant revolution" and whether they fit in with Marxism or not.

He has said : "If the entire peasantry is taken as one class and a mass organisation is set up accordingly then it inevitably becomes a peasants' association led by rich and middle peasants. Apart from this the trend towards open movement will increase among the peasants through open mass organisations and as a result we shall become the leader of another revisionist mass organisation. Only through building a secret party organisation among peasants can the leadership of poor and landless peasants be established within the peasant movement" (*Ghatana Prabaha*, May, 1969).

Here Charubabu raises two questions about "peasant revolution" and also answers them—how is that revolution to take place and who is to lead it? Like a *bhadralok*, Charubabu too, is a man of a single idea—just as we are not to work for mass organisations among workers, so we must also avoid all open mass organisations among peasants. We shall talk about revolutionary theory of them "from outside", we will not go "among" them, since those are all revisionist affairs. But surprisingly enough, although we will not remain within peasant mass organisations or fight about their grievances and demands or take any responsibility, we shall establish the leadership of poor and landless peasants in these organisations through forming a secret party. This is sheer infantile imagination or black magic, having no bearing on Mao's Thought. There is another question in this context—are these mass organisations suspended in a vacuum? If we do not remain within them, will they not come under the sway of revisionist leadership? If that is so then shall we be able to establish our leadership there on poor and landless peasants "just" by forming the secret party while the others look on passively? Is this the theory of class struggle or is it petit-bourgeois romanticism?

The secret party of peasants may be set up. Now what will be the work of this party? Their task will be to engage directly in guerilla warfare. So it is clear that in Charubabu's opinion, guerilla warfare is the only tactic for conducting the revolu-

tionary struggle and the party unit that he will set up with poor and landless peasants will lead "the entire peasant masses". There is nothing about worker-peasant alliance or working class leadership in the peasant movement. At times he does talk formally about working class leadership but his main argument is : "Our party should be set up mainly among peasants" (*Deshabrati*, Autumn Number, 1968). Upto now we used to think that the Communist Party belongs primarily to the working class. No doubt the concept of setting up the party "basically" with peasants is an original contribution of Charubabu. He has used the word "the peasant class" seven times in this context. When did peasants constitute a class for Marxists ?

But Mao has taught us that in the revolutionary struggle of the masses, armed warfare is not the "only" tactic, any other means must also be used alongwith it. But here Charubabu is preaching thoughts opposed to the Thoughts of the Chairman in the name of the Chairman as he does on many other issues. If armed struggle is isolated from the masses then it gets changed into Putschism and its failure becomes inevitable. Armed struggle needs a close relationship with the masses and such a relationship can only be established through trade unions, peasant associations, youth organisations, students' unions etc.

Mao had gone to Hunan Province in China in 1925 (that is, a year before the armed fighting, guerilla warfare and the battle to capture power by peasants had started) to organise the peasants. What was his basic slogan there ? "Get Organised" (Mao. I, p. 24). We see in the Hunan Report that from January to June all peasants got organised in Peasant Committees under the leadership of the Communist Party. Membership figures were four lakhs, that is, more than ten lakhs peasants came under the leadership of the Communist Party. Peasants had not started the movement for land grab in that phase. They participated in the northern campaign lasting from July to September. The second phase in the peasants struggle started in Hunan after Chiang Kai Shek's betrayal. The land grab movement lasted from October

to January 1927. The membership of Peasant Committees went up to 20 lakhs and 1 million peasants came under the Party's control. Mao had said that this organisation was the "first great contribution" of peasants. The phase of the establishment of Red power in China started from then onwards.

In a previous chapter we had noticed that when the first Red Army was set up in China's Ching'ang mountain, the workers were its backbone. When the Red Army began to suffer very heavily under continuous attacks from Chiang's forces, Mao began to ask for workers for the Red Army from the Hunan Provincial Committee of the Party. He had then written: "Proletarian leadership is the only key to success in the revolution." He was then acutely aware that it was vitally necessary for the working class to take an active part in the peasant revolution and that just proletarian leadership or ideology will not suffice. So he stressed more work in the big industrial units of China and the despatch of an increasing number of workers to the Red Army in the villages. He had given maximum emphasis on working class leadership and participation by workers in the peasant revolution in his *A Single Spark can Start a Prairie Fire*.

The "Hunan Report" has been translated into Bengali. Either Charubabu has not read it or he is deliberately neglecting it, revising it and making it out of date. In any case he says the exact opposite of what Mao had said: "Is guerilla warfare possible without mass movement and mass organisation? The revolutionary peasant class (?) has proved through its struggles that neither is indispensable for guerilla warfare. What is indispensable is revolutionary politics, that is the spread of the Thought of Chairman Mao. This is possible only through a secret party organisation.. It is also possible to unite the masses and have guerilla warfare by setting up guerilla squads through secret organisation and using it against the class enemy and by giving top priority to politics ... Mass organisations and movements strengthen the trend towards open movements and expose revolutionary workers to the enemy.

Whom can we depend on for guerilla warfare? ... the

development and spread of guerilla warfare depend only on poor and landless peasants; no other class can direct this struggle" (*Deshabrati*, 4 December, 1969).

Charubabu's message is amply clear — only "poor and landless peasants" will lead his peasant revolution — "no other class can direct this struggle". In other words Charubabu by a single statement, totally discarded the role and leadership of the working class. But to deny working-class leadership in the democratic revolution means denial of Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao. To deny working class leadership, to replace it with petit-bourgeois leadership means Bakuninism or Guevarism of to-day. There is one difference between Guevara and Charubabu. Although the former's politics was wrong, he himself was honest and he never used Mao's name to spread his own politics, whereas Charubabu is spreading Guevara's politics in the name of the Chairman.

Charubabu has provided an "argument" as the reason behind his desire for exclusively poor and landless peasants' leadership but this argument is totally invalid. He does not care for Marxist logic but he wants to sweep away everyone by Bakuninite will power and emotion. "Because poor and landless peasants nourish the maximum amount of hatred against the feudal classes ... This fire of class hatred can be stoked among poor and landless peasants through revolutionary politics and the politics of seizure of state power by the peasant masses. Only they can develop guerilla warfare by conquering death and accepting boundless self-sacrifice".

Since Charubabu has no faith in the revolutionary role of the working class which he denies, then the party that he has set up with the name of Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) is anything but Marxist-Leninist and neither it is a Communist Party. It is but a new edition of the old petit-bourgeois terrorist party of Bengal.

At the beginning Charubabu and his group occasionally used the term "working class" but now it is falling into disuse and in its place they are increasingly using the term "have-nots". For some time they used to say "the class of the have-nots" and now instead of working class only the

have-nots are referred to. Proletariat or working class means workers in Bengali, it cannot mean have-nots at all. Actually the working class is not made up of have-nots. The revisionists of India and particularly of Bengal had circulated the term have-not to indicate the working class and it had created a lot of confusion. Bakunin had found revolutionary enthusiasm among vagrant have-nots and he thought that they provided the main revolutionary force. Charubabu knows quite well the difference in meaning between the two terms and he has quite deliberately used the term "have-not" to spread his Bakuninite ideology which is opposed to Marx, Lenin and Mao.

One example will suffice. The *Deshabrati* of 27 November 1969 quotes a statement by Mao in its front page. In English it goes like this : "Proletarian leadership is the sole key to victory in the revolution. But building a proletarian leadership for the party and setting up party branches in industrial enterprises in key districts are important organisational task for the party at present, ..." (*A Single Spark* ..., p. 122).

Charubabu repeatedly says that he is going to build up [a village-based party with "the proletarian peasant class". "Our Party has to be set up basically among the peasants"; the working class will not lead the peasant revolution, it will be the poor and landless peasants who will lead it, "no other class can direct this struggle." Actually the landless peasant is proletarian and the poor peasant is practically that. Charubabu and his group are building the basis of their "secret party" with such have-nots. All these things fit each other splendidly and very subtly they have transformed even Mao into a petit-bourgeois revolutionist by using the term "have nots" for "working class".

Recently they have been using another sentimental and unscientific term—that is, the poor. They promise that they will build their party with all the poor brethren in the country. A booklet published by the *Deshabrati*—"Start an armed struggle against the exploiters and eliminate class enemies" (10/10/69)—says : "We the poor brethren have decided to fight and that is why we have decided to build up our own group and our own party. We call out to all field labourers,

all poor and middle peasants, blacksmiths, potters, weavers, middle and small shopkeepers, poor teachers and clerks of the locality" — in other words, to all poor and labouring men to join this party. Everyone from a locality has a place in the party except for the working-class men who work in the factories. Such a party might be everything else except a Marxist-Leninist party. Even Mao Tse-tung has warned us against such petit-bourgeois, sentimental revolutionaries.

Charubabu and his group are forming a village-based party with landless and poor peasants and the poor in general but the working class has not much place there. But they call their party the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party. This is nothing but deceit.

A Marxist-Leninist Communist Party is the party of class-conscious, forward looking workers and led by their scientific socialist ideology. Men from other classes who believe in this ideology and participate in the workers' revolution can also join this party. Long ago Marx and Engels had defined the working class in their "*Communist Manifesto*."

Already Charubabu and his group are demanding that the poor and landless peasants are changing into workers through peasants' struggles : "Through a bloody class struggle with the landlords and their state they (poor and landless peasants) are getting proletarianised." (Satyanaryan Sinha in *Deshabrati*, 25 September '1969). In Algeria poor and landless peasants had waged bloody guerilla warfare and class struggle for ten years. Where else has such a battle taken place except in China and Vietnam ? Were the Algerian poor and landless peasants proletarianised through this battle ? Even after it won such a war, how could Algeria become a semi-colonial country so quickly ? This could not happen in China and Vietnam mainly because there the working class had been powerfully organised by the Communist Parties and could establish their leadership in the democratic revolution.

Charubabu is circulating another term. They are saying that the physical leadership of the working class is not necessary in a peasant revolution, its ideological leadership is sufficient and that they will provide this ideological leadership. If the

working-class does not take an active part in the party and the movement then its leadership cannot be established. The main reason why a true Communist Party had not been set up in India is that the number of workers had been negligible there and bourgeois, petit-bourgeois and kulak elements had predominated. Even among them the number of true Marxist theorists was extremely small. The faction set up by Charubabu and others hardly has any workers and within this short time the ideology and the bureaucratic style of work that they have revealed have very little to do with Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao. The ideology that they will bring to the peasant revolution without working class leadership is not Marxist ideology but the ideology of petit-bourgeois revolutionism.

The issues that we have discussed in relation to the peasant revolution are also related to a fundamental question and unless this is always kept in the forefront, the peasant revolution may get distorted.

Poor and landless peasants hanker after land and the ownership of land. This is a legitimate demand in the present situation. Landlords have deprived them of their land and they have been fighting for land for a long time. The programme of the democratic revolution means return of land to their hands. But a democratic revolution also aims at advancing towards socialism where there will be no private ownership of the means of production. Only if there is a strong working class leadership in the democratic revolution and if proletarian dictatorship can be established, can this conflict be resolved and the entire agrarian and industrial system advance gradually towards socialism. But unless the working class leads the democratic revolution, the land problem cannot be solved ; if the peasant revolution does occur under poor and landless peasants' leadership as Charubabu wants it to occur then kulak power will be strengthened and as a result the basis for counter-revolution will be established instead of socialism. Only if a strong working class leadership exists, can the poor and landless peasants strengthen themselves against the kulaks.

Peasants and the petit-bourgeoisie have dual character. Collectively they are going through a transition. The better and revolutionary side of most of them wants ; a democratic revolution and unity with others : they are prepared to come under the sway of working class politics, organisation and even ideology. They are also prepared to advance towards socialism along with the working class in future. But they also have a bad and regressive side. From the ideological point of view they have many confusing feudal and contradictory elements of thinking which make them weak and vacillating. If they do not get the strong, correct and revolutionary leadership of the working class they may lean towards many forms of opportunism, revisionism and even facism.

Therefore the issue of leadership is the most crucial issue for the united front in a democratic revolution. The success or failure of the revolution, whether it will move towards socialism in the future or strengthen capitalism, depends on which class is going to lead it.

In their "political resolution" Charubabu and others have said : "In the present phase, the main conflict in our country is between feudalism and peasant masses".

This too is one of the many achievements of Charubabu's group. At one stroke of the pen it has totally denied the present state and social system of India, its semi-colonial situation and taken us straight back to medieval times !! India's conflict is "the conflict of the peasant masses under feudalism" — that is, the main conflict of the feudal, not of the imperialist age.

When India was a colony of British imperialism, its support came from feudal chieftains, landlords and the comprador bourgeoisie. When after the British left and India became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country, the same two classes continued to be the main support and allies of imperialism.

What Mao had said about China in 1926 and Stalin in 1927, is also valid for India today.

In the British age, British imperialism had kept feudalism alive in India. Today this feudalism is kept alive by global

imperialism, especially American imperialism. Feudalism could not have survived in India without the predominance of imperialism. The main ally and support of imperialism is feudalism. They are inextricably linked with each other, one cannot be separated from the other. If one is dealt a blow the other too is damaged. The twin forces of imperialism and feudalism have jointly exploited the Indian masses and kept alive the present semi-colonial, semi-feudal rotten social system. At every attempt to "eliminate" the jotedar, the police, the army, the entire administrative machinery immediately turn up. In the ultimate analysis what is at the basis of the Indian state machinery?—Imperialism. India is a semi-colonial, semi-feudal country and these two terms indicate the many enemies of Indian people; imperialism and its main ally feudalism. These two forces are the biggest obstacles to India's progress and the first task of the Indian democratic revolution is to destroy these two enemies.

If India is a semi-colonial, semi-feudal country, then Charubabu's definition that "our country's main conflict lies between feudalism and our peasant masses" is dangerously mistaken. If we accept this then the term semi-colonial also becomes meaningless and we have to deny the importance of imperialism in India.

Another question crops up in this context—is feudalism an enemy of peasants alone, and not of the workers? It is true that peasants are directly exploited and opposed by feudalism and they provide the main force for uprooting feudalism. But if they are not directed by working class leadership against feudalism then their leadership falls into the hands of the bourgeoisie and its agents and in that case it will become impossible to liberate them. Even though the working class is not directly exploited by feudalism, it knows that unless feudalism is destroyed along with imperialism their own liberation as well as the liberation of the entire Indian people is impossible and equally impossible will be India's industrial progress and advance towards socialism. The united front that will be formed for the Indian democratic revolution with workers, peasants, the petit-bourgeoisie and the national bour-

geoisie will have to be led by the working class. Charubabu's basic theory that India's "main conflict lies between feudalism and the peasant masses" naturally takes them towards building a village-based party under poor and landless peasant leadership. Such theory denies the role of working-class leadership. This is the theory of petit-bourgeois, anarchist "peasant revolution" and not of the democratic revolution formulated by Marxism-Leninism and Mao's thinking.

12

THE NAXALBARI MOVEMENT—WHY HAS NOT THERE BEEN A CORRECT ANALYSIS ?

Many contradictory statements have come out about the peasant movement in Naxalbari. All the facts of this movement have not been made public so far and neither has there been a Marxist analysis. What Charubabu and other leaders have said about this movement contradict one another. What is even more confusing is that the theory about this movement forwarded by Charubabu is totally irrelevant. Their main theory is that open mass organisations and movements are revisionist and revolutionaries should avoid them. We have already seen that its theory is totally anti-Marxist and it has no relevance to any revolutionary movement in any country. The practice in Naxalbari also proves Charubabu's theory to be wrong as the movement in Naxalbari had been an open one and its organisation (that is, the peasant association) too was open.

Charubabu has also said : "The lesson that the Naxalbari struggle has taught us is that the peasant did not join it for land or crops but to capture state power ("Reap the harvest from the Indian revolutionary peasant struggle and go forward", *Deshabrat*, 4 December 1969). We have to see whether the claim is justified or not.

Comrade Jangal Santhal, a prominent leader of the Naxalbari movement and the Chairman of the Shilliguri Sub-division Peasant Samiti gave a statement on 24 May 1967, which describes how the movement had developed. There we can

see that (1) the movement was entirely "open", (2) it developed through an open mass organisation, that is, the Peasant Samiti, (3) it started with economic demands like land and crops, (4) although it was open and based on economic demands, it was not a revisionist movement.

Comrade Jangal Santhal has said in his statement that there is a lot of vested land (Khas land under the Government) in the Naxalbari area which the jotedars tried to hold on to illegally. From 1959 onwards peasants began to cultivate this sort of land. The jotedars tried to evict them forcibly and brought many cases against them. Conflict raged between jotedars and peasants on this issue with the police assisting the jotedars. When the jotedars failed to evict the peasants through legal processes, they began to "sell" a lot of land to their agents. This intensified the struggle over land. "The Samyasisthan tea garden episode with which attempts are being made to stir up struggle happened as the tea garden owner was trying to evict peasants of twenty years' standing from the vested land and settle newcomers for whom house were being built on the peasants' land. This was leading to struggle. In the Naxalbari episode, conflict began over the attempt to beat up and evict Bigul Kisan who had got his rights from the Diwani Court...It is noticeable that in the entire area the tea garden authorities and land-owners were trying their best to evict poor peasants with police assistance. If ever the peasant protests, it is described as anarchy. But apart from attacks by jotedars, there is no instance of peasant violence" (*Kalpurush*, No. 4, 1967).

It is clear from Comrade Jangal Santhal's statement that the Naxalbari movement began as a spontaneous economic movement.

The more the oppression of jotedars intensified with police assistance, resistance by peasants too began to sharpen and their struggle for land began to acquire political dimensions.

Comrade Kanu Sanyal shares with Charubabu the eagerness to deny or underestimate the economic basis of the Naxalbari movement. As a result, Kanubabu is so deeply involved in contradictions that he has been making many

ridiculous attempts to save face. Of the ten great tasks of the Naxalbari Peasant Association that Kanubabu mentions in his report, the first four are economic—to seize land from jotedars, to distribute land among peasants, to destroy all old documents, plans, deeds etc., to cancel debts of peasants to money lenders and jotedars, to confiscate hoards of rice, cattle etc. of jotedars and to distribute them among peasants. Actually the peasant movement starts from demand for land and other economic demands. This is only natural and should not be denied. But Kanubabu denies this economic aspect and says : “The peasant movement in the Terai is not an armed struggle for land but for state power” (*Report on the Peasant Movement in the Terai*, p. 12). All economic struggles are revisionist—a wrong notion such as this is confusing Kanubabu as well as Charubabu.

After a few lines Kanubabu says again : “We all know that every class struggle is a political struggle and the goal of political struggles is the capture of state power.” It is not very clear as to what Charubabu and Kanubabu mean by class struggle. They do not talk much of economic struggle, but is it not class struggle ? Also, where did Kanubabu learn that the goal of all political struggles is to seize state power ? Do revisionists and opportunists also not engage in political struggle and is the aim of such politics the capture of state power ?

Comrade Kanu Sanyal has also said : “Without this [revolutionary] consciousness the struggle for land, however militant, is a militant economist movement. A militant movement for land creates opportunism within the peasant movement and plunges the great and struggling part into despair as had happened in the movement about benamiland. So this militant economist movement ultimately loses its way in the blind alley of revisionism” (*Ibid*, p.14). Kanubabu, like Charubabu confuses economism with economic struggle. A militant movement for land does not create opportunism by itself, that depends on the leaders controlling the movement. If opportunists are in control then the movement degenerates into economism, and if Marxist revolutionaries are in control then

it is transformed into a struggle to seize state power. Examples of both kinds abound in history. In the words of Lenin (which we have quoted earlier), in a crisis situation an economic struggle can be transformed into a political and revolutionary movement. It all depends on the leadership.

Just because revisionists and reactionaries called the Naxalbari movement merely a struggle for land by peasants, it is also ridiculous to protest by calling it entirely a struggle to capture state power. Actually the Naxalbari movement began as a militant peasant struggle for land, but it was gradually transformed into a political movement through struggle. But it could not become a movement for the capture of state power due to the mistakes of Charubabu and others.

How did this militant peasant struggle for land advance towards revolution? After the 1959 Peasants' Conference a struggle for land was launched in this area under the leadership of the 'Marxist' Party. In the 1967 general elections Jangal Santhal stood as a CPI(M) candidate and lot of revolutionary propaganda was done among the peasants. Before the elections were over the struggle became extremely intense. The jotedars killed some peasants like Shobhan Ali, Ishan Ansari, Bigul Kisan and some others. Peasants began to prepare for battle against the jotedars.

Comrade Kanu Sanyal has beautifully described this in his report : "Between the end of March and April 1967 almost all the villages were organised. Where the membership of Krishak Sabha never was more than 5000, even there membership figures shot up to nearly 40,000. From 15 to 24 thousand peasants became wholetime activists. Krishak Samitis were formed in every village. At incredible speed revolutionary peasants set up Krishak Samitis through hundreds of meetings and made them into armed bands of village volunteers" (*Ibid*, p. 17).

The United Front won the elections and formed its ministry. The United Front Government, especially the Minister for Land Reforms, Harekrishna Konar, declared their policy of

giving land to landless peasants and organising movements against exploitation. But these promises were not fulfilled. Promode, Harekrishna and other leaders arrived on the scene of action but instead of assisting this movement they tried to suppress it and made no moves towards stopping the oppression of the police and the jotedars.

"On 18 March 1967 the Shiliguri Subdivision Peasants' Conference declared (1) obey the instructions of the Krishak Samiti in all village matters, (2) organise with arms to crush the resistance of the jotedars, (3) break up the jotedar's monopoly over land and start redistribution through Krishak Samitis" (*Ibid*, p. 6).

On 24 May Jangal Santhal's (the Chairman of the Krishak Samiti) statement was published. On 25 May the Jallianwalla-bagh massacre was repeated—the police of Harekrishna and the United Front Government savagely murdered 10 women and children. In this way, the peasant struggle that had started off as an economic movement was gradually transformed into an armed peasant struggle and a revolutionary struggle against the reactionary government.

Comrade Kanu Sanyal has further stated that the Naxalbari peasants had overthrown feudalism and "had established the political power of the peasants by setting up local revolutionary committees in every locality and a central revolutionary committee...the leadership of this struggle was naturally in the hands of the most militant section of the peasantry—the landless peasants. That the scope of such revolutionary activities could become so far-flung and extensive was due to the fact that among the peasantry 70 percent of the landless peasants led this struggle" (*Ibid*, p. 9-10). "In their own localities they had set up a new political power based on armed revolutionary forces, that is, rule by the revolutionary peasant committee was established" (*Ibid*, p. 13).

Kanubabu is making two claims here quite forcefully : (1) the peasants had overthrown feudalism, (2) they had set up their political power. Undoubtedly, as a result of the peasant revolt, most jotedars and mahajans had fled from the villages, the peasants had occupied land and had set up some

sort of rule in the vallages. But are these sufficient for seizing political power? The centre of the political power of the ruling class in the countryside are police stations. Were those attacked and destroyed? No, those were untouched. At most, their operations were much more restricted than earlier. Enemy penetration is impossible in a liberated area and in that sense no liberated areas had been set up although this movement had aimed at that. Therefore, is it not an exaggerated and unreal claim to say that political power had been captured?

There is another question. This was a movement that had achieved so much, had brought a reawakening among Indian revolutionaries and masses, had organised 40,000 peasants and armed a large number of them, the movement that had shown the true way to democratic revolution. But despite the existence of a revolutionary situation in India, such a revolutionary movement could not spread to other areas and died down within a few months without a fight. Why did this happen?

Comrade Kanu Sanyal has also asked this question and tried to answer it: "Even though our defeat is temporary, why have we failed to advance the struggle of the heroic Terai peasants? It is because we lacked a powerful party organisation, and a deep confidence in the masses, the failure to develop a powerful mass base, total ignorance about military matters and thinking along old lines, and only a formal analysis of the task of seizure of state power and revolutionary land reform" (*Ibid*, p. 17).

"We failed to take the struggle firmly to a higher phase because we failed to have a firm confidence in the masses and to build up a powerful mass base. Between April and September 1967 the heroic peasant masses organised themselves at a fantastic speed, set up the revolutionary Peasant Committee, performed ten great tasks and took class struggle forward at a tremendous speed. But now we fully admit that we had no confidence in them....

"Even though we said otherwise from April to September, leadership had imposed itself on

the masses. Whenever the heroic peasant masses tried to do something on their own, we the petit-bourgeoisie prevented it. This was because we did not understand the work of the people and neither did we try to understand it" (*Ibid*, p. 19).

"We had failed to take up the struggle of the heroic Terai peasants"—only Comrade Kanu Sanyal had so openly admitted this failure. But even he has not really analysed the reasons for the failure and neither has he shown the way to their remedy.

In his opinion the first reason was the lack of a powerful party organisation ; but a party should have emerged through a revolutionary movement like the Naxalbari movement. Why did such a party not come into being despite the presence of all the ingredients and such a great opportunity ? This was because of the wrong politics of Charubabu and other leaders that ran counter to Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao, their Bakuninite petit-bourgeois revolutionist politics. It is not possible to build up a strong party by following such wrong politics. They have not corrected this wrong politics even now.

A burning example would be the mass meeting at the Calcutta Maidan of 1 May of this year. Not just the Coordination Group but all other Naxalites had gathered there. When at the instigation of the treacherous leaders of the "Marxist" Party their goondas attacked the Naxalites, then all Naxalites had resisted it and had defeated that hateful conspiracy. Kanu Sanyal declared the set up of the Marxist-Leninist Party from the forum of that meeting. The call of 1 May is "Workers of the world, unite". But Kanu Sanyal did not utter this call for unity, although the most crucial task then (as now) was to unite all Communist revolutionaries. How can those who cannot unite Communist revolutionaries of the same way of thinking, those who do not have the outlook for performing this elementary task and rise above petit-bourgeois sectionalism, build a "powerful" party and direct a revolution with lakhs and millions of people ?

At the 1 May Maidan meeting the aggressive, arrogant and narrow outlook that Comrade Kanu Sanyal expressed was

totally opposed to the set-up of a "powerful" party. He had said : "Even though the revolutionary situation in our country is extremely ripe and the people have a revolutionary outlook and boundless loyalty to the great leader Chairman Mao and the Communist Party of China, a middle-class revolutionism in various shades is springing up all over India taking advantage of these factors. Whatever they do, consciously or unconsciously they are creating obstacles in the way of the advance of the revolutionary struggle by denying the control of the revolutionary party, which is a major condition for the revolution. This is a trend within the revolutionary movement. We shall have to fight against this trend and mobilise the true revolutionaries around our party" (*Deshabrati*, 8 May 1969).

What emerges clearly from Kanubabu's words is that Kanubabu and Charubabu and such others have established a monopoly over the revolution. If anyone else talks of the revolution, then it is the upstart middle-class revolutionism in many shades and those who talk about it are all counter-revolutionaries. What is the meaning of acknowledging the control of the "revolutionary party" that they had set up in an undemocratic, un-Marxist and bureaucratic manner? It does not mean the acceptance of certain principles or any programme (this "Party" has not provided any programme!). To accept the personal "control" of certain individuals means the abandoning of the ideological struggle, of Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao. The "Party" set up by Charubabu and Kanubabu and others by accepting the bureaucratic control of certain individuals has actually become a tremendous obstacle to the building of a "powerful" Communist Party.

According to Comrade Kanu Sanyal, the second reason behind the failure to take the Naxalbari movement forward was the "petit-bourgeois leadership" of the movement. This is no new discovery as this has been an old characteristic of all the Communist and Leftist parties of India. The problem is how to remove this weakness and establish working-class leadership over the democratic revolution. But there

is no sign of removing this weakness by the "Marxist-Leninist" leadership. The lack of faith and respect that these leaders have for the working class and the way in which they talk about a village-based party with poor and landless peasants, the un-Marxist manner in which they had set up the "Party" and the dramatic way in which Kanubabu himself declared it at the Maidan meeting, that is, "imposed it on the masses"—all these expose the character of their "petit-bourgeois leadership" and their politics of petit-bourgeois revolutionism.

Kanubabu's third reason is : "We had failed to take the struggle firmly to a higher phase because we lacked a deep faith in the masses and could not build up a powerful mass base...We now fully admit that we had no confidence in them". Confidence in the masses is not something subjective, it has to be established through day-to-day work. We shall not engage in economic movements or trade unions, or peasant associations or students' unions in the interests of the masses—no powerful mass base can ever develop by following such negative, petit-bourgeois revolutionist politics. The mass line that Charubabu talks about is merely petit-bourgeois phrasemongering.

The fourth reason is : "Our failure in the task of establishing political power and revolutionary land reform...The revolutionary peasants at their own initiative and through mass mobilisation had performed two tasks, which were forming central and local revolutionary peasant committees and redistribution of land. We had made of these two tasks the most formal of all. Our petit-bourgeois dreams were working behind this. We never seriously considered the deep significance of these two tasks" (*Ibid*, p. 23-24). It is clear from Comrade Kanu Sanyal's words that the leaders of the Naxalbari movement had become isolated from the masses and this had happened because of wrong and petit-bourgeois revolutionist politics. In this context one has to accept a fundamental tenet of Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao which is that there is a qualitative difference between the revolutionary economic movement and economism and that

all economic movements are not revisionist. If Charubabu and Kanubabu had followed this Marxist tenet then they would not have "neglected the task of revolutionary land reform" during the Naxalbari movement.

Charubabu and others had failed to take the revolutionary Naxalbari movement forward because of wrong politics. Their petit-bourgeois revolutionist politics has become even more blatant to-day.

The peasant movement in the Naxalbari area became quiet by September. There were no attempts at correcting the mistakes through self-criticism, reviews and criticism. Charubabu and others spread the word that tremendous preparations were going on in Naxalbari and soon guerilla warfare would spread far and wide. Before anything could happen *Deshabrati* declared with a great fanfare that the "second phase" of the Naxalbari movement was about to commence. On 7 September 1968 Comrade Babulal Biswakarmakar fought singlehandedly and heroically and lost his life in a fight with the police. This was the beginning and the end of the "second phase".

During the period of the "second phase", Comrade Sushital Roy Choudhury suddenly came out with the following statement: "The history of the nine months under the United Front Ministry is just this that they had crushed the Naxalbari peasant movement and had very faithfully performed the task of a watch dog of imperialism, Soviet social revisionism and the interests of feudal and bureaucratic compradore capital" (*Deshabrati*, 25 January 1970). In the next issue the "mistake" was corrected—one should read it as "the attempt to crush" !

Two years after the Naxalbari movement had quietened down, the truth which had been concealed so far came out willingly, or unwillingly in a *Deshabrati* report. But even here the arrogance of petit-bourgeois revolutionism was boundless "The armed peasant struggle in the Darjeeling district after a long silence had plunged into the soil of Dinajpur most forcefully, crossing the boundaries of Darjeeling...Above all this is guerilla warfare under poor-peasant leadership [The

news that was given out showed that the peasants had "eliminated" one jotedar—such is guerilla warfare]. They have applied the respected Comrade Charu Mazumdar's teaching—we can build up a guerilla organisation today without a mass organisation—and through this they have forcefully exposed middle-class vacillation about "action" and revisionist thinking about setting up mass organisation without guerilla warfare" (*Deshabrati*, 18 September 1969).

The most crucial question about the Naxalbari movement was—how far was an attempt made to establish working class leadership over the movement? Workers have a long tradition of militant struggle against tea and cincona estate owners in Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and the Dooars. The close links between the workers and peasants of this area too have a long history. In August 1966 almost 2 lakhs of workers went on strike in Darjeeling and the Dooars and in many cases the workers had also advanced towards armed struggle. Just afterwards, in November the peasants began a battle for the harvest against the jotedars. There would have been no difficulty from any side to establish a worker-peasant militant alliance and working-class leadership in this area.

When the Naxalbari movement began, workers from some tea-estates spontaneously went on strike in its support, ignoring the opposition from their revisionist and opportunist leaders. Comrade Kanu Sanyal has said that the tea garden labourers "occupied a place in the front ranks of the peasant struggle. From 24 May 1967 onwards they had armed themselves and had participated in every fight and had gone on strikes. Despite opposition from so-called Communist trade union leaders they had helped the Terai peasant struggle and the tea garden workers to escape from the quagmire of exclusive trade unionism and economism. It was from this anti-feudal struggle that the front based on worker-peasant alliance under tea workers' leadership had developed" (*Ibid*, p. 15).

There is no doubt that bands of workers had spontaneously come forward in support of the peasants. The revisionist leaders of their Union were cornered and in the heated

atmosphere of the peasant revolt these leaders ceased to have any influence. So this was a wonderful opportunity for the establishment of working-class leadership. But Charubabu and others made no attempts at all in that direction. On the contrary, one can even say that they deliberately did not try to exploit the situation because of their wrong politics of petit-bourgeois revolutionism.

It was on the question of leadership that Comrade Kanu Sanyal had tried to create a lot of confusion by saying many contradictory things. "The peasants had established political power" (*Ibid*, p. 9). "The leadership in the struggle was in the hands of 70% of landless peasants" (*Ibid*, p. 10.) "Peasants had set up the rule of the revolutionary peasant committee", (*Ibid*, p. 13). A crucial aspect of this struggle was the support from the tea garden labourers and others from the working classes. That meant further intensifying of the struggle by setting up a united front in the anti-feudal struggle. The struggle of the heroic Terai peasants had solved this problem" (*Ibid*, p. 15).

"A front based on true worker-peasant alliance and under tea-workers' leadership had developed from this anti-feudal struggle" (*Ibid*, p. 15). "The problem of leadership of this front has been solved...it will be led by the party of the proletariat" (*Ibid*, p. 16).

"In actual fact the workers and peasant comrades were working under petit-bourgeois leadership and in every locality the party organisation was inactive" (*Ibid*, p. 18). "We the petitbourgeois leadership in the struggle had actually imposed ourselves on the masses" (*Ibid*, p. 19).

At the same time that landless peasants led the Naxalbari peasant movement, the worker-peasant front was set up under workers' leadership and the petit-bourgeois leadership imposed itself on the masses—what sort of politics is this? In actual fact the leaders of the Naxalbari movement have only very hazy ideas about leadership, or they had a lot of differences of opinion with some of them formally acknowledging working-class leadership without trying to apply it. Leadership does not emerge in a day; it has to be built up

deliberately through struggle. Again, there are some like Charubabu who do not want working-class leadership. Instead of coming out with it directly, they say it in a roundabout manner with special emphasis on peasant leadership, especially the leadership of poor and landless peasants. Charubabu has proudly stated when discussing the lessons of the last two years' peasant movement : "The lesson that we have got from the Naxalbari struggle is that the peasant did not depend on anyone else but he had fought standing on his own legs" ("Come forward by reaping the harvest from the experience of the Indian revolutionary struggle," *Deshabrati*, 4 December 1969).

It cannot be doubted at all that the Naxalbari fight was a heroic one, that it was advancing along the revolutionary Telengana path, that it had struck a severe blow at the vested revisionism of the last twenty years of the Communist Party, that it created great panic among the exploiting classes of India and opened up a new chapter in the Indian democratic revolution. What may be questioned is the correct leadership. What stands out is that because Charubabu and others could not provide correct leadership in the movement, they failed to take it to a higher phase despite its many possibilities. This was the main reason behind its failure.

It is not unusual for leaders to make mistakes in revolutionary movements. But what is unforgivable is not to admit it after criticism and not to rectify it. Three years have gone by but Charubabu and others have not made any criticism and self-criticism about the mistakes of the leadership in the Naxalbari movement. On the contrary, we see that they glorify these mistakes day after day in a planned manner and follow the politics of their petit-bourgeois revolutionism.

What is the meaning of the above statements of Charubabu ? Does it not mean that peasants do not depend "on others", that is, on the working class, that they themselves will bring about the revolution ? This implies a denial of working-class leadership in the Indian democratic revolution. Also Charubabu always says that he will build up a village-based party with peasants and establish the leadership of poor and landless

peasants. Charubabu's theory of petit-bourgeois revolutionism is opposed to Marxism-Leninism and the Thoughts of Mao.

Naxalbari failed, and so did Srikakulam and Debra-Gopiballabhpur because of this adventurist theory.

One can only deceive oneself, distract oneself with slogans like "200 villages liberated near Srikakulam" and "20 liberated village zones set up" near Calcutta etc. The class-enemy is not at all affected by that.

But the Indian democratic revolutionary movement was not exhausted in Naxalbari, Srikakulam, Debra-Gopiballabhpur. The Indian revolutionary crisis is deepening every day. The spark from Naxalbari is spontaneously travelling everywhere, bringing lakhs and millions of peasants, workers and students into the movement and inevitably pushing them in the direction of armed revolution. The problem is which is the way to its preparation—the path of petit-bourgeois revolutionism of Charubabu or the path of Marxim-Leninism and the Thoughts of Mao ?

13

SOME MORE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE "THOUGHTS" OF CHARUBABU

A dominant characteristic of the faction called the Indian Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) is its sky-high arrogance. They have made it known through their writings, conversation, propaganda and behaviour that they have got monopoly rights over the revolution and there are no other Indian revolutionaries except from them. They are not even prepared to acknowledge as revolutionaries those Comrades who had participated in the Telengana peasant movement and other Communist revolutionaries. They consider them all to be counter-revolutionaries. Whoever has any difference of opinion with them are cowardly intellectuals, conservative "pundits", enemy agents, etc. None but they has the right of taking Mao's name. The main reason why all the revolutionary groups of Bengal could not unite was the arrogance of Charubabu and the bureaucratic viewpoint of his group.

Before the Naxalbari episode, they never had much

contribution to make in their long party careers either in work or in theory. They spent most of their time in factional politics. They were staunch followers of Ranadive in the Randive period. They emerged as revolutionary leaders after the Naxalbari movement. Without having any truck with any kind of warfare they became experts in guerilla warfare. They never tried to overcome their old faults and weaknesses through self-criticism and these increased into arrogance, bureaucratism, commandism, imposing decisions from above, etc. Commandism and bureaucratism became extremely strong among them in the name of "secret party" and "revolution". There was no longer any room for a democratic attitude or self-criticism.

This arrogance has so swelled them up that they do not hesitate to deny history. Charubabu has written, completely denying Telengana : "Naxalbari was the *first* instance of the Thoughts of Mao on Indian soil. It was in Naxalbari the peasant came out for the *first* time on the battlefield to seize power" (*Deshabrati*, 4 September, 1969). He simply dismissed the great historical truth that it was in Telengana that Mao's Thought was *first* applied and the peasants seized power for the *first* time. It is the irresponsible, petit-bourgeois anarchist who expresses his own arrogance in this manner ignoring historical truth. It seems that Charubabu does not even care for the assessments made by the Chinese Party. Did not the *Peking Review* say when the Naxalbari movement began that "that torch of revolutionary struggle of Telengana has been re-lit in Darjeeling" ? It does not seem that Charubabu cares for his own party resolution. His party had said in its "political resolution"— "The executive body of the Andhra Provincial Committee which was then directing the Telengana struggle has correctly stated then that only the path shown by China, that is, the path of peoples war can bring success to the Indian revolution. Even though the Ranadive clique was following a wrong and suicidal policy, the heroic peasant revolutionaries of Telengana did not deviate from the path of fighting. They took their fight forward by adopting guerilla warfare tactics" ("Political

Resolution", 20 April '69, Deshabrati Publication, p. 7). It was in Telengana that Mao's teaching was *first* applied outside China. By following this lesson and under Communist leadership, peasants had set up a truly liberated area over large parts of Telengana and had fought against the powerful enemy for five years in the *true* manner of guerilla warfare. One does not have to belittle the Naxalbari movement to ask whether a truly liberated area had been established in Naxalbari and whether true guerilla warfare had taken place to protect it. Is it not arrogant of Charubabu to distort a revolutionary mass movement and ignore Telengana to give first place to Naxalbari ?

Another good example of the petit-bourgeois arrogance of Charubabu and such others is the expulsion of the Andhra Co-ordination Committee from the All India Co-ordination Committee. The Andhra Committee was the strongest among all the others that had been set up in the different Indian States by Communist revolutionaries. It included many comrades who had participated in the Telengana peasant struggle.

On 7 February 1969 at a meeting of All India Co-ordination Committee, the Andhra Committee was expelled in a purely bureaucratic manner. The Andhra Committee was not invited to this meeting and three reasons were shown for its being expelled without having a chance to defend itself : "After discussions with the Andhra Pradesh Co-ordination Committee representative, the All India Communist Revolutionary Co-ordination Committee feels that there are fundamental differences between the All India and Andhra Committees. They have decided therefore to break off relations with the Andhra Co-ordination Committee, and consider them from now on as friends and comrades outside the All India Co-ordination Committee.

"The difference relates primarily and principally to the question of allegiance to the Chinese Communist Party. The All India Co-ordination Committee thinks that Comrade Nagi Reddi's statement on the Kerala incident and his refusal to modify the same even after the clear and unequivocal statement by the Chinese Comrades reveal that Comrade

Reddi and the Andhra Pradesh Co-ordination Committee supporting him are not loyal to the Chinese Communist Party. The second issue concerns a struggle in Srikakulam. The All India Communist Co-ordination Committee feels that this struggle is being given only lukewarm support by the Andhra Committee and is not being regarded as their own struggle. Such an attitude springs from a political line which is basically different from the political line of the All India Committee. The third dispute is about election boycott. The All India Committee considers election boycott to be the basic political line for an entire epoch; the Andhra Committee still regards it just as tactics. The All India Co-ordination Committee had decided that Nagi Reddy should resign within a specific period i. e., by the last week of October 1968. He has not accepted this decision, and this refusal follows from his basic political attitude" (*Deshabrati*, 13 March 1969).

The first comment to be made about this resolution is that Charubabu and two or three other leaders had decided beforehand to expel the Andhra Committee to preserve their own personal, bureaucratic leadership, for the Andhra Committee had raised the demand for democratic centralism. Only an upstart Committee and not any responsible democratic organisation can expel an entire Committee without giving it a hearing on the basis merely of a discussion between one representative and another.

The question of "the Andhra Committee's allegiance to the Chinese Party" has been used in a very cunning and dishonest way. What does "allegiance" mean? The Communist Parties of the different countries of the world are all independent, equal believers in proletarian internationalism. No Communist Party demands the allegiance of a Party of another country, and the Chinese Party certainly does not make any such claim since this is opposed to Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao. If allegiance means ideological allegiance, then it must be stated that long before the Naxalbari events and the emergence of Charubabu and others on the Indian revolutionary, political scene, the Andhra Committee leaders had been following Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao and

they had joined the Co-ordination Committee precisely because of this.

Certain facts should be recalled about the Kerala incident which was made the occasion for expelling the Andhra Committee. An armed popular attack was made on Tellichery thana on 22 November 1968 under the leadership of Comrade Kunnikal Narayanan and his daughter Ajitha. (Comrade Narayanan, it must be remembered, had already been expelled from the Co-ordination Committee). Many adivasis lived in the Pulpalli area, and their lands were being grabbed by supporters of the Congress and the United Front. The UF Government had done nothing about it, and the adivasis had started a movement against such oppression.

After this incident Comrades Charu Majumdar and Nagi Reddi issued two statements condemning it. Charubabu told a *Statesman* correspondent at Siliguri on 27 November: "Isolated attacks on thanas would serve no purpose. The Narayanan group is not working according to the ideals of the Naxalites". Charubabu also stated that the incident could have two interpretations—it may have been staged by the Namboodiripad Government itself or the Central Government may have incited it in order to discredit the Kerala UF Government.

Within a couple of days of this statement, Peking Radio described the incident as an armed struggle of the enraged masses against a reactionary Government. Charubabu naturally accepted the Peking Radio view but he refused to admit that he had made a mistake about the Kerala happening.

On 5 December *Deshabradi* carried a statement from Charubabu entitled "From our special correspondent, Siliguri, 22 November (received late)". The statement within brackets is significant, because Peking had not expressed any view before 27 November. The implication was that Charubabu was giving his own original views when he declared in his statement that "the courage shown by the poor people of Kerala has inspired the revolutionary masses of the whole of India who have acclaimed their action".

Having read the Chinese journals, Charubabu in *Deshabrat* on 26 December wrote pompously : "We have to evaluate who is participating in a particular struggle and against whom the struggle is being conducted ... The participants in this revolt was directed against a reactionary state power .. Politics has definitely been put in command in the Kerala revolt. The weakness has been that class struggle has not been given sufficient emphasis. Neglect of class struggle makes politics superficial and weakens the entire struggle". The man who had declared mass-organisations, trade unions and Krishak Samitis unnecessary and had talked exclusively of guerilla war was now giving a lecture to the Kerala revolutionaries criticising them for ignoring class struggle and going in for guerilla war alone ! It should be noted also that the Charubabu group made no protest when the United Front Government of Nambudiripad brutally tortured the adivasi inhabitants of Pulpalli, Comrade Narayanan, and particularly Comrade Ajitha.

The Andhra Committee had criticised Comrade Nagi Reddi's statement and Comrade Reddi had accepted this criticism. So the first charge has no basis. Again, the statement was made by one Comrade, but an entire Committee was expelled. This was the political style at one time of the terrorist leaders of Bengal. The second charge of the Co-ordination Committee can be described by only one word — impudence. About the third charge it can be stated that the Co-ordination Committee had never taken any decision before on the question whether election boycott was the revolutionary strategy for an entire period or a question of tactics. The Andhra Committee had accepted election boycott and everyone knows that Nagi Reddi had resigned from the Assembly.

What does this arrogant and arbitrary expulsion of the Andhra Co-ordination Committee prove ? It proves that the All India Co-ordination Committee which later change its name to CPI (M-L) is only a narrow faction headed by self-appointed leaders who are every bit as bureaucratic, arbitrary and undemocratic as the CPI(M) and CPI leadership. The

characteristic feature of the leaders of this faction is that they recklessly carry on all sorts of misdeeds in the name of secrecy. The revolutionaries that they have been able to attract are generally honest but totally inexperienced in the tactics and trickery of the old leaders who have come from the revisionist party. The leaders of the "secret" party are utilising this situation to establish their bureaucratic leadership. To sum up, expulsion on such trivial grounds is a major crime against Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao.

Many feel that when a "revolutionary" party has been formed it is the duty of all revolutionaries to join it irrespective of its defects and to try to bring it to the correct path through internal ideological struggle; did not Mao do this? Yes, Mao did do this. But despite deep differences with the leadership Mao had never been expelled from the party and so he got the chance to carry on ideological struggle within the party. But there is no such scope within this terrorist secret party of India. Here expulsion is the order of the day. Whatever political line Charubabu imposes from the top has to be accepted blindly, any kind of questioning means immediate expulsion. Not just the Andhra Committee but many other comrades have been expelled from the party. There is no difference between these leaders and the leaders of other "Communist" parties so far as bureaucracy goes. Another point may be raised in this context. CPI(M) leaders also indulge in extreme revolutionary talk, there are many honest revolutionary cadres in the party, they too have carried on many bloody struggles of peasants for land—why did we not carry on the ideological struggle from within that party?

The political resolution of Charubabu's party claims not once or twice but five times that "our policy is correct, our analysis is valid". Where is the scope for ideological struggle, criticism and self-criticism since the correct line has already been found? But we have seen that their views are neither correct, nor valid in matters of mass organisation, trade union, peasant movement, national movement, student movement,

etc. This claim is only petit-bourgeois revolutionary arrogance. It is not without reason that many passages were left out from the text of this resolution when it was published by *Peking Review*. (The recent second edition of this resolution has not corrected these errors).

The political analysis made by the Charubabu group from this arrogant point of view is often not only incorrect but also dangerous. Thus the resolution says right at the beginning : "We broke with the neo-revisionists 18 months ago. During this period the Indian people have realised clearly the total opportunism and complete political bankruptcy of all bourgeois revisionist parties. They have lost faith in all bourgeois and revisionist parties and have no doubts now about the total futility of the parliamentary path". (This section, too, was left out by *Peking Review*).

These sentences beautifully express the anti-Mao, Bakunin-Guevara line of thinking of the Charubabu group. To assert that the people have lost faith in bourgeois and revisionist parties and realised the futility of the parliamentary path—at a time when lakhs and crores vote for these parties in elections, join their meetings and processions on various issues, while the party and mass organisations of the Communist revolutionaries have not crystallised and remain full of confusion—such statements are sheer arrogant, futile, irresponsible, petit-bourgeois revolutionist wishful thinking. Such a 'theory' assumes that the people are already free of illusions, that there is no need for any more ideological struggle. Yet Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao have all taught us that the class-struggle, ideological struggle and the need to free people of illusions would remain as long as different classes exist in society. Otherwise, there would have been no need for the great Cultural Revolution in China 20 years after such a mighty revolution. The full-scale leadership of the working-class cannot be established without bitter ideological struggle. Mao Tse-tung had to give instructions again for ideological struggle and mass organisation to free people from illusions in 1945, after 25 years of bitter armed struggle led by the

Communist Party against the Chiang government and the Japanese invasion.

The Indian people "have definitely realised the complete futility of the parliamentary path". What do such phrases mean? More people have voted in the recent mid-term elections than ever before. More than 70% of the electorate cast their votes in Naxalbari itself (i. e., Kharibari, Naxalbari, Phasideoa—the three thanas that make up the Phansideoa centre) and they voted not even for the anti-Congress parties but for the Congress. Is this a proof that our vote-boycott slogan has led to the people losing all faith in the bourgeois and revisionist parties?

Comrade Kanu Sanyal declared in his Maidan speech on 1 May: "The people have kicked out their old party—the Congress" (*Deshabrati*, 8 May 1969). Kanubabu is pleased and thinks that the people have done a good thing by kicking out the Congress. But is Kanubabu not then under electoral illusions? We gave the slogan of election-boycott. The people, instead of listening to us, voted in their millions and kicked out the Congress. Is not this a significant event? For a whole year election boycott has been our principal slogan. Have we reviewed this slogan in terms of its results i. e., have we made a concrete analysis of concrete conditions?

Where lies the root of Charubabu's theory that the people have become free of illusions? The root lies not in Marxist realism but the narcissistic thought of petit-bourgeois revolutionism. Assume that the people have become free of illusions, then jump directly into peoples' war, start guerilla war, the people will spontaneously come over to our side, the spark will of itself kindle a flame—there is no need for preparations for mass organisation, trade unions, Kisan Sabhas, student-unions, etc. Such anarchist politics which rests on wishful thinking, weakens and does not strengthen the revolutionary front, even though a revolutionary situation exists.

Another side of the arrogance and impudence of the Charubabu group is abuse. It is one thing to abuse and hate

the enemy. But Charubabu forgets the difference between enemies and friends and starts vulgar abuse of any Communist revolutionary, any friend with whom he may have a slight difference of opinion. He does not go in much for ideological debate and rational analysis.

The Co-ordination Committee resolution which expelled the Andhra Committee had declared that the latter would be regarded as "friends and Comrades outside the Co-ordination Committee with whom efforts would be made to preserve non-antagonistic relations". But soon after the expulsion the Andhra comrades and other expelled members began to be abused as "renegade enemy agents", "intellectuals afraid of revolution", "conservative pundits", "intellectuals as cowardly and frightened as rats". Abuse became for them ideological struggle. Comrade Nagi Reddi had criticised the Charubabu group on some matters of military tactics. He had had it. "Once upon a time he mixed with his rice, the ghee of the Telengana struggle and now he is going around asking everyone to smell his hands and so get together a party" (*Deshabrati*, 21 February, 1969). "The agents and renegades who had gathered around a dung-heap, attracted by the stirk" etc. (*Deshabrati*, 31 July 1969). At least the polite verb form was used initially but after a couple of weeks even this was dropped, and we had phrases like "Nagi Saheb Says". (How would Charubabu like it and to what depths will the language and politics of revolutionaries descend if anyone says in reply "Charu Sahib Says", "Charu Company has done this" ?)

'Sasanka' of *Deshabrati* is a champion of revolutionary politics by abuse. It is difficult to hold him back when he gets into his stride. Among innumerable examples of his politics of abuse is the following : "When the reactionaries were busy suppressing the Indian and particularly the Andhra revolutionary peasant struggle by using Nagi, the Nagas rose in another part of the country. Andhra can be checked by Nagi but how to stop the Nagas ? Nagi is no good there" (*Deshabrati*, 14 August 1969).

There is no connection at all between Nagi Reddi and the Naga struggle, the two have been brought together only to

abuse Nagi. 'Sasanka' the great revolutionary did not stop even here. Advancing still further in his "revolutionary thought" he declared that both the imperialist fronts in India—the Congress and the United Front Government—were crumbling and therefore a third defence front was needed—"this third front they are building now with the Nagi Reddi clique". Such is the "non-antagonistic relationship" of the petit-bourgeois revolutionists.

Lenin had stated that many comrades take recourse to abuse merely to hide their own failure in the ideological struggle.

It may be recalled here that mutual abuse among comrades had increased very much in China during the ultra-Left domination of the party after the failure of the 1927 revolution and Mao had to fight against this tendency. "Political adventurism was accompanied by sectarian organisational policies of attacking Comrades" (Mao, vol III, p. 182). Mao had then to patiently explain to comrades that such abuse, quarrels, intolerance, vindictiveness and narrow sectarian attitudes were entirely opposed to party and class interests.

The Charubabu group is second to none in their ability to make enemies out of friends without any reason or on the slightest pretext. This is not surprising since here we have two or three men who have taken out a copyright for revolution and do not give a damn for others. Suprakash Ray is the author of the famous *Bharate Krishak Vidroha O Ganatantric Andolon* as well as many other books (*Mao Tse-tung, Vidrohi Bharat, Marxiya Abhidhan*, etc.). *Bharate Krishak Vidroha*, the product of lifelong labour, is an indispensable weapon for the Indian peasant movement. In the long history of the Indian Communist movement very few can claim to have done work of equal importance. But upstart petit-bourgeois revolutionists have no respect for such work. So suddenly Suprakash Ray was declared to be an enemy in a long article in *Deshabrati* (21 August, 1969). His crime is that in the preface to his *Kakdwip, Sonarpur, Bhargarer Krishak Sangram* (1967) he had written : "Telengana, Kakdwip

and Naxalbari—these are like three columns of flame. The first two had first spread the flame throughout India... Naxalbari is another name for today's flame". This is Suprakashbabu's great crime since "to equate the Kakdwip struggle with Telengana and Naxalbari is to cause confusion". So "we have to be careful" about Suprakashbabu.

In the India of to-day, many honest intellectuals have realised the need for democratic revolution, peasant revolution. Such an understanding is by no means the monopoly of Naxalites alone. Such supporters of the revolution will increase rapidly, provided we follow the correct path and the correct policy. Mao has taught us that in a neocolonialist country all those who show sympathy for the peoples' democratic revolution are also revolutionary, they are our friends. Many articles sympathetic towards the democratic movement have been published in the *Frontier*. But the petit-bourgeois revolutionist disease of the Charubabu group has become so virulent that they discover a terrible conspiracy behind such sympathy.

Charan Gupta in *Frontier* had condemned the setting up of police camp at Debra and Gopiballabhpur by the Police Minister Jyoti Bose and the barbaric repression going on there on peasantry. Charan Gupta here had made no adverse comments on Naxalites. On the contrary, he had been sympathetic towards them. This became a big crime in the eyes of the great revolutionary "Sasanka". He challenged Charan Gupta in *Deshabrati* (13 November, 1969)—"What right does he have to show sympathy for Naxalites ?" There is no trace of politics in Sasanka's long article, only the cheap, vulgar abuse, typical of petit-bourgeois revolutionism. When Bengali abuse ran out, he borrowed the term 'tout' from English. 'Such advocacy by Jyoti Bose's tout Charan Gupta may cause confusion among revolutionaries and spread the lure of an easy life in the midst of the harsh life of revolutionaries". So we must beware of such a "really dangerous" man. "We know the open enemy but we must be a thousand times more wary of the secret enemy who poses as a "friend". With

a revolutionary like 'Sasanka' in our country, it is surprising that we have not yet had a dozen or more revolutions.

'Sasanka' thundered again in next week's *Deshabrati*. Now he reduced to ashes Rafikul Islam who had ideologically criticised Charubabu's politics in an article named "General Line in Colonial Revolution" (*Frontier* 18 October, 1969). 'Sasanka' did not reply to any of these criticisms possibly because he could not ; he merely declared that these were "attacks" and "slander". It was said threateningly—"We know this renegade agent hiding under a false name". Having run out of the usual abuse he declared that Rafikul Islam was a coward, since "he had not the courage to write under his own name". The courageous revolutionary had completely forgotten in his revolutionary enthusiasm that 'Sasanka' was also a pseudonym.

Abuse like "swine" "renegade" flows freely from 'Sasanka's' pen. He equates ideological struggle with the use of vulgar language. What does "renegade" mean ? When the CPI (M) was formed, CPI leaders condemned it as a party of renegades. When Communist revolutionaries left the CPI (M), "Marxist" leaders denounced them as renegades. (Is leaving a party such a crime ? Did not Lenin leave the RSDLP to build the Bolshevik Party ?). Such abuse is characteristic of petit-bourgeois revolutionists of all countries, a way of proving cheaply one's revolutionary valour.

Charubabu's group does not stop with abuse ; abuse is followed by threat and intimidation. Satyanarayan Sinha had been a jawan, a military hero. He is now an ideological leader of *Deshabrati*. He has threatend : "Every renegade should remember that if the party is sought to be brought down in this early phase, if the attempt is made to throttle it at birth, such attempts will be smashed and there is woe in store for all types all brands of renegades" (*Deshabrati* , 28 August, 1969) .

We have had IPS (inner-party struggle) at one time in the Indian Party. This had little of ideology in it, and consisted mostly of mutual abuse and slander by leaders. The Charubabu group is reviving the tradition of IPS. 'Sasanka',

the *enfant terrible* revolutionary in particular, is following the style of work of the Ranadive period and has already become famous as a champion of abuse. Unfortunately, the poisonous atmosphere they have created is by no means healthy for the revolutionary movement.

The arrogance of Charubabu and Sasankababu comes partly from their assumption that the revolution is their monopoly, no one else is a revolutionary except them. Such arrogance is one main enemy of revolutionaries. Mao has warned revolutionaries repeatedly—"It is wrong to think of oneself as 'the only revolutionary'." Mao Tse tung, right from the beginning followed a policy which assumed that there are many revolutionaries and their friends in the country who must all be unified to attack the real enemy—"unite our true friends to attack our real enemy" (Mao : *An Analysis of Classes in China*, 1926). There is another side to the arrogance of the Charubabu group. The first statement of the Co-ordination Committee had fixed four main tasks for the Communist revolutionaries in India. Among these, popularising Marxism-Leninism and Mao's Thought through uncompromising ideological struggle against revisionism and neo-revisionism and uniting all revolutionaries on this basis—was placed as the third task instead of the first. When *Peking Review* published a statement it put this task in the first place. The second statement of the Co-ordination Committee quietly followed suit and corrected the error. But the leaders said nothing in public, never admitted that they had committed such an enormous mistake and never did any self-criticism.

Deshabrati had made many statements opposed to Mao's Thought in connection with the Black Power question raised by Utpal Dutta's *Manusher Adhikar*. These errors too, have never been admitted by Charubabu's group. Utpalbabu wrote a sharp rejoinder to *Deshabrati's* criticism which completely silenced it. Charubabu had criticised the revolt in Kerala under Kunnikal Narayanan and Ajitha. He changed his line when Peking Radio expressed sympathy for the rising a few days later but did not admit its mistake.

Deshabrati did not say a word when the people of Pakistan had risen all over the country against Ayubshahi, because Peking Radio had said nothing about it. Peking Radio had enough reasons not to comment on these events. But *Deshabrati* had no reason at all not to support the heroic struggle of the Pakistan people. They have neatly combined arrogance with slave mentality.

Deshabrati thinks that no one else has the right to translate Mao's books in Bengali and publish them. Many others have published Mao's books but *Deshabrati* never prints their advertisements. It is not even as if their own translations are good or accurate. They contain disastrous errors,—“socialism” becomes “imperialism”.

Another dangerous characteristic of the Charubabu group is their failure to consider Marxism-Leninism and Mao's Thought as a totality. A tendency is getting stronger among them to separate Mao's Thought from Marxism-Leninism and consider it in isolation. They are attempting this in a sly manner. They have begun to whisper that the conditions and the age in which Marx and Lenin lived have all changed, that our situation is quite different, etc. When other Communist revolutionaries talk of Marxism-Leninism they are abused as ‘conservative pundits’. It should be remembered that Bernstein tried to introduce revisionism inside the labour movement on the pretext of changed circumstances. Khrushchev too used the plea of change in situation to establish revisionism in Russia and declared that the situation in which Lenin wrote *State and Revolution* and *Imperialism: the Last Phase of Capitalism* no longer existed. But the Marxist theory of class struggle, proletarian revolution, dictatorship of the proletariat can never change as long as capitalism exists and wherever it exists. These are eternal truths for the capitalist era; what can change are the tactics of class struggle and revolution in different countries and different situations. Mao stood on the firm scientific basis of Marxism-Leninism. He correctly and successfully applied Marxist-Leninist policies against the enemy in the specific situation of China and defeated the party's internal enemies—both Right revisionism

and Left sectarianism through the weapons of Marxism-Leninism. "Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao" have grown up in this heroic struggle of fifty years. Mao has extended Marxism-Leninism through this struggle through practice and 'concrete analysis of concrete situations'. He has enriched it, and developed in particular the theories of people's democratic revolutions against imperialism in present day semi-colonial, semi-feudal countries. The weapon of Marxism-Leninism has become sharper in the hands of Mao.

Generally Charubabu's group does not refer to Marxism-Leninism except for some hasty, purely formal acknowledgements. In his 24-page long report Kanu Sanyal has not referred once to Marx, Engels, or Stalin, has talked only once of Lenin, twice of "Marxism-Leninism and the highest point of Marxism today—the Thought of Mao". But 23 times he has referred to the "Chairman". This brave lion mocks all those revolutionaries who talk of Marxism-Leninism as "conservative pundits"! Although they call their faction "Marxist-Leninist" there is little sign of this in their writings and activities.

Let us take up one or two examples, Charubabu has written: "They have resolved at this meeting that they are going to set up a all-Andhra revolutionary party which will be based on the Thought of Mao. They have declared that whatever is happening in Srikakulam follows the Thought of Mao" ("Is Srikakulam going to be India's Yenan?" *Deshabrati*, 13 March 1969). In another article in the same journal (4 September 1969), Charubabu has said that his party's sole task was to carry on revolutionary civil war—'This revolutionary civil war can be carried on only on the basis of the Thought of Chairman Mao and by creating a new style of work'.

But the theories propounded and the style of work created by Charubabu's group in the name of Mao are soon going to make Mao's Thought just as backdated as Marxism-Leninism.

From the beginning Charubabu has expressed contempt and hatred for ideology and he has always stressed "action". His action means the "elimination" of the class enemy—the

jotedar. For example : "We have also to be careful about whether an attempt is being made to crush active work in the name of 'political struggle'. Our political consciousness and style of work constitute a weapon with which we can resist imperialist infiltration into our party" (*Deshabrati*, 4 September 1969). It should be noticed how these statements express petit-bourgeois revolutionist arrogance.

Another example : The *Deshabrati* representative on going to Srikakulam was ecstatic at seeing the fulfilment of "Comrade Charu Mazumdar's prediction" and wrote that the militant peasants there were extremely eager to see Mao. What more was needed ? Immediately a great revolutionary theory was propounded : "How was this high level of political consciousness achieved by the backward, illiterate, simple-minded tribals ? They never passed through the grades of mass organisation, nor did they take any part in any economic movement. How then was it possible ? They did not listen to the lessons of any 'invincible theorist' with folded hands. What about it then ?" In his excess of enthusiasm the revolutionary author has forgotten that Charubabu had not started the movement of the Girijans, it had begun long back. The Girijans had been involved in quite a few economic struggles and had been influenced quite substantially by political movements.

The *Deshabrati* representative has further said : "We realise now through experience that the new theory that the great revolution has upheld in place of old ideas or organisation in the field of mobilising the masses had a deep significance for world revolution as well as for the Indian revolution. It can be realised after the 9th Congress that the endeavour of the people inspired by revolutionary political consciousness becomes limited by the bounds of traditional organisation however revolutionary its formation might have been. Set up revolutionary committees through discussions with the people about the lessons of the great Chinese Cultural Revolution and the will of the people can be expressed only through these committees—the validity of these instructions from Srikakulam is being proved. Another very valuable lesson derived from

our new experience in the field of the application of Mao's Thought in the Indian revolutionary situation is that we have to make fundamental changes in our ideas about mass organisation—Party, Guerilla Warfare, Revolutionary Committee”.

Let us take a few examples of the “peasant revolutions” that are being manufactured in the “Deshabrati factory” in Calcutta and in other places, under the inspiration of Charubabu's “new” revolutionary theory : “Do you know that 307 villages have been liberated in Srikakulam ?” “Red political power has been established in Srikakulam”. Maps have been on Calcutta walls to show that guerilla war and armed struggle started in hundreds of places from one end of the country to another. During the Ranadive era too, revolution used to be similarly manufactured.

Such statements by Charubabu's group are excellent examples of what Lenin had long back described as immature, infantile disorder ! The horrid disease of their petit-bourgeois revolutionism, their undigested revolutionism, has crossed all limits and have gone so far astray that they do not hesitate to distort horribly and completely reverse the lessons of Mao, of the Cultural Revolution, of the 9th Party Congress.

What is the meaning of statements like—“mass endeavour is limited by the bounds of traditional mass organisation” ? All their lives Lenin, Stalin and Mao had worked in “traditional” mass organisations and that is why they could make the workers' revolution successful. What else did they do but the “traditional” works of revolutionary Marxists mass movement, mass organisation, the Communist Party, trade unions, peasant associations etc. ? Mao has repeatedly stated that there can be no mass movement without mass organisation and without these the revolutionaries become isolated from the masses and no revolution can succeed in such a situation. Mass organisation and the party, mass movement and revolution—all these are inextricably linked up with one another.

We have already seen how the influence of extreme Leftists spread in China after the defeat of the 1927 Chinese Revolution as a reaction against the former Right-wing party leadership,

how the party was becoming estranged from the masses due to their adventurism and how hard Mao had to fight to direct the party along the right channels.

Now we are told that the lesson of the Chinese Cultural Revolution and the 9th Party Congress is that we have to change our old ideas about mass movement and mass organisations "fundamentally"! If this is correct then we must also believe that the Cultural Revolution and the 9th Congress have not only invalidated the lessons of Marx, Lenin and Stalin but the lessons of Mao as well. In actual fact the Cultural Revolution and the 9th Congress have further revived the "old" lessons of Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao in the context of Soviet revisionism and the present world revolution. Lin Piao has stated in the Report of the 9th Congress: "An unprecedented and great revolutionary mass rising has emerged in the 'heart of capitalism'—in Japan, Western Europe and North America. The people are waking up in increasingly greater numbers". So we see that the thinking of Charubabu's group is opposed to the teaching of Lin Piao as well. Where the Chinese leaders are openly welcoming all movements, whether political or economic, against imperialism and vested interests in South East Asia, West Asia, Africa, Latin America as well as in Western Europe, Charubabu's group is rejecting all this as "old" ideas.

Charubabu's writings will have us believe that even guerilla warfare is an invention of his own. Guerilla war is nothing new in Indian history. The Maratha people had crushed the most powerful Mughal forces under Shivaji's leadership by adopting guerilla tactics. We should remember that local tribal people showed great expertise in that guerilla war. Towards the beginning of British rule the peasants in Bengal fought with the help of guerilla tactics during the "Sanyasi Rebellion". During the great Revolt of 1857-59, after the Sepoy Divisions were defeated in Delhi, Lucknow and Kanpur, peasant, artisan and tribal masses had started peoples' war and guerilla warfare. The guerilla wars waged by Kunwar Singh, Tantia Topa, Amar Singh, Feroz Shah, Maulvi Ahmadullah of Faizabad are immortal episodes in

Indian history. During Bengal's fiery decades too, Bagha Jatin and the heroic warriors of Chittagong had adopted to some extent the tactics of guerilla warfare. We have a lot to learn from these guerilla and mass wars. In a changed historical context the present Indian mass movement has revived the question of peoples' war and guerilla warfare for the workers and peasants.

Following Marxist-Leninist principles Mao has placed the theory of peoples' war and guerilla warfare on a scientific basis in today's context. As a *first* rehearsal of Mao's scientific principles in this age in India, guerilla war and peoples' war had occurred in widespread areas of Telengana. Charubabu's group does not even acknowledge this burning historical truth.

Undoubtedly the episodes that Charubabu's group presents in a thrilling and exaggerated manner in the pages of *Deshabrati* do constitute an aspect of peasant struggle but it is ridiculous to announce them with great fanfare as guerilla war. Charubabu's "guerillaism" is nothing but a new edition of our old terrorism. What sort of guerilla war is it to suddenly attack a "particular individual" and "eliminate" him? Does not guerilla war mean an attack in a distinctly military manner on the *enemy divisions*?

The flames of Charubabu's "guerilla" war are spreading all over India—Bihar, Orissa, U. P., Punjab, Assam are all coming under it. Everywhere we see the same result—the "elimination" of one class-enemy, of one jotedar: 'We have tried to learn humbly at the feet of the poor peasant, we have tried to understand the significance of the instructions of our leader Comrade Charu Mazumder, we have accepted the teaching of Chairman Mao—do not set up open organisations before liberated areas are established' (*Deshabrati*, 18 December, 1969).

No one can object to the worship that disciples offer to their guru, but it is unforgivable impudence to drag Mao into that. Apart from this, wherever has Mao said—do not set up open organisation before liberated areas are established? Mao had repeatedly said just the reverse and the name of

a chapter in his *Hunan Report* is—Get Organised. Organisation has to come first, followed by action.

Charubabu has said: "One can conduct the campaign for eliminating the class enemy only by inspiring the poor and landless peasants to crush the overlordship of the feudal classes in the countryside and to *consolidate the state power of the peasants*. That is why the elimination of the class enemy is a higher stage of class struggle and the task of elimination through guerilla tactics is the first stage" (*Deshabrati*, 4 December, 1969).

We have to ask here whether feudalism can be destroyed by "eliminating" a few class-enemies, a few jotedars and mahajans and can the "state power of the peasant" be established in the countryside in this manner? Our old terrorists also thought along similar lines—get rid of a few police officers, some lieutenant governors and viceroys and British imperialism will crumble, making way for Swadeshi rule. Actually the theory of "eliminating" the class enemy that Charubabu's group is propounding is not at all the theory of Maoist guerilla warfare or peoples' war, it is merely an anarchist-terrorist theory.

Another question is—how can guerilla war be the 'higher form' as well as the "first stage" at the same time and in the same phase of class struggle? This is another instance of the original dialectics of Charubabu's group,

Charubabu's guerilla action means stabbing a class enemy from behind and eliminating him. It is not guerilla war to eliminate a class enemy in this fashion. Guerilla is a French term which means a particular form of battle. Mere killing is not a battle, whatever else it might be. A campaign of such elimination might have been called guerilla war. But, Seleukus, what a strange country this is! Everything is Ersatz, everything is false—a false Renaissance, a false saint, a false democracy, false parliament, constitution, planning, Communist Party. But do not all these falsehood suffice, must we add a false guerilla war as well to increase the extent of deception?

A fundamental tenet of Marxism which Lenin, Stalin and Mao have always stressed is that Marxists have to work on the basis of "a concrete analysis of a concrete situation", that they have to advance step by step, keeping alive the links among the manifold activities of the party. Petit-bourgeois, anarchist revolutionaries have to faith in this, they believe in subjectivism. I want a revolution, so I can start off with a few youths, form a secret party, mobilise them in the task of "eliminating the class enemy" and call this guerilla warfare—and this will bring the disaffected masses to my side. Belief in spontaneity emerges from such subjectivism from the rejection of reality. Charubabu also believes in spontaneity like the anarchists. Marxists never believe in this, they place their faith in the organised strength of the working class and the people, in mass organisation and the party, in raising the level of mass consciousness to the revolutionary stage.

Charubabu instructs : "Those comrades who are working in peasant areas must never underestimate the necessity of a general economic slogan along with them political propaganda. Unless the broad peasant masses are brought into the movement backward peasant will not be mobilised at the stage of political understanding and the hatred against the class enemy cannot be sustained. From now on we should spread the slogan—"We must stake our claim on the next crop".. This slogan must be spread...This slogan will bring the broad peasant masses to the movement and transform the character of our conscious political propaganda and movement" (*Deshabrati*, 1 August, 1968).

This is another good example of Charubabu's subjective thinking. He has taken a lot of things for granted. Long ago Bakunin had prescribed this path for petit-bourgeois revolutionaries but not a single revolution came out of it anywhere on the world. As its opposite, Marxism has taught us that mere propaganda and movement and slogans are not enough (though these too are necessary)—organisation is even more important. The more the mass organisations of workers, peasants, students, and the minority communities

are strengthened, the more the democratic movement spreads under revolutionary leadership, the better the field for armed struggle will be prepared. Revolutionaries have got to understand these interconnections in order to fulfil the revolution.

14

COMMUNISTS WILL NOT LEAD THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE !!!

The far-ranging thinking of Charubabu naturally has not ignored the national question and here too he has startled everybody with some contradictory and virulently revolutionary statements that come so easily to him. As on every other question, on the national question too his thinking is un-coordinated, full of half-truths, errors and petit-bourgeois wishes and ideas.

He has said : "A revolutionary party will set up the United Front through armed struggle and that party can unite the different national upsurges... On the basis of this principle (that every nationality must have full rights of self-government, to be independent and autonomous) a revolutionary party may easily unite with the national struggles of the Nagas, the Mizos and others ... Many think that the Communist Party will lead the national movement of different nationalities... This is a wrong idea. *The Communists will not lead the national movement.* But wherever national struggle exists, they will unite with them. Their responsibility is to build up class-struggle, not national struggle" (*Deshabrati*, 30 May 1968). A lot of confusion inherent in petit-bourgeois revolutionism has been splendidly revealed in such statements.

The Indian national problem is a most complicated issue. India is the homeland of numerous nationalities with so many languages, religions, cultural traditions and habits. Due to uneven development they are all at different stages of development; some are at a relatively advanced stage, some are very backward. Due to the partition of India some have been (like the Bengali nationality) divided. On account of such a

situation a number of conflicts arise among the people and the ruling class tries to encourage them in order to ensure its own rule and this creates divisions within the peoples' democratic and liberation movement.

Without any attempt at a realistic analysis of such a complex, real problem, Charubabu ended his task with reiterating some old formula and assumed that the very voicing of these slogans (for example, every nationality must have the right to be independent and autonomous, etc.) will spontaneously bring about unity in the national struggle and solve this problem. That same Charubabu who instead of bringing about unity among a handful of Communist revolutionaries of the same line of thinking, created so much more disunity among them, will establish unity in such a vast and complex field with the help of mere slogans ! What extraordinary faith in black magic !

There are two distinct characteristics of the Indian national movement. One is the freedom movement of all the people all over India against imperialism, the other is the question of self-rule and self-determination of the numerous national minorities in India. Although Stalin had drawn our attention to this dual national problem of India forty or fifty years back, the Indian Communist leaders never thought much about it.

The fundamental enemy of all the Indian nationalities is imperialism. If the national liberation struggle does not follow the right path and does not get correct leadership, then there is a lot of possibility of its being diverted to a wrong course. This struggle may forget its main enemy and can degenerate into a suicidal fighting among the nationalities themselves. The conflicts among Bengalis and the Assamese, the Biharis and the Bengalis, the Punjabi Hindus and the Punjabi Sikhs point to that. Today when class struggle is intensifying among the nationalities, the agents of imperialism and Indian vested interests are exploiting the national liberation struggle for their own reactionary purpose. The Shiv Sena movement in Maharashtra and the "Separate Telengana" movement are clear examples of that. Everyone knows how Christian Missiona-

ries had tried to exploit the Naga national struggle in the interests of imperialism. Missionaries are very active among most Indian tribals. The reactionary Jharkhand Party in Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal is attempting to divert the Santhal liberation struggle into inter-nationality conflicts. They are demanding a separate state with parts of Bankura, Birbhum, Midnapur and Purulia as well as Chota Nagpur. This Jharkhand movement is being directed by foreign imperialists and the representatives of Indian compradore capitalism and feudalism. They are trying to smash the militant unity against the common enemy that has been forged between the Santhal people and Bengali, Bihari and Oriya peasants and workers.

The national liberation movement cannot exist in a vacuum. Either the working class or the bourgeoisie has to lead it. Both the revisionist Communist Parties have failed to lead this struggle. It is not surprising that in this situation, bourgeois (and petit-bourgeois) elements will come forward to lead it and to use it in its own class interests. In this context even Charu Mazumdar, the leader of the "Marxist-Leninist" Communist Party, tells us straight : "Communists will not lead the national movement". This only means giving up the national movement to the reactionaries. Just as Charubabu has made a gift of trade unions, peasant samitis and students' unions to the revisionists, so too he is surrendering the national movement to the fascist reactionaries.

In the statement quoted above Charubabu has said : "The revolutionary party will lead and set up the United Front through armed struggle and that revolutionary party will be able to unify the different national upsurges". Here Charubabu has assumed two things as granted on account of his Bakuninite great "will power". If a revolutionary party leads the armed struggle even without a clear Marxist programme of action, there will be (1) the formation of the United Front, (2) the national upsurges will be unified. Marxist scientific reasoning is totally absent here. There is something else to be noticed, Charubabu is always talking of a "revolutionary party". Very seldom does he refer to the working class. The revolutionary

party that he has built up has an insignificant place for the working class. It is not at all surprising that such a party will avoid the concrete analysis of a concrete situation and depend on "will power".

Charubabu has further said : "The precondition for setting up such a United Front is that every nationality must be engaged in armed struggle...Every nationality must have the right of self-determination and even the right to secede". For Charubabu armed struggle is the primary criterion for assessing national movements. The Shiv Sena is not totally opposed to armed struggle. A better example would be the lackeys of America in South Vietnam who have not only broken away from North Vietnam but are also waging a powerful armed battle against it. Does not the 10 year long armed struggle in Algeria provide another such example ? Does not Charubabu's statement explain further that those nationalities that are not engaged in armed struggle have no place in the United Front visualised by Charubabu ? They may as well go to hell for all that Charubabu's "revolutionary" party cares, they have no responsibility for them.

Charubabu is prone to mechanical phrase-mongering. "Every nationality has the right of self-determination, and even the right to secede". Just because that right exists it does not mean that Marxists must always and unconditionally *support* it as their duty. Marxists believe that every individual has freedom of worship but they themselves do not support religion as they are materialists. Every nationality has the right of self determination and secession but whether or not Marxists will support that depends on concrete situations. This right is inextricably linked up with the class-struggle of the workers, it is subordinate to the question of class struggle. Dalai Lama of Tibet not only wants national autonomy but desires breaking away from China as well. All the reactionary imperialists of the world uphold his demand. The Tibetan working class and labouring men too want national autonomy but they also want to continue the struggle against their main enemies—imperialism and feudalism—together with the Chinese

workers and masses. The working class is the main force behind popular unity against imperialism and feudalism in all countries. The task of Marxists everywhere is to mobilise the forces of the working class within all the nationalities, or in the words of Lenin to organise them in a *centralised organisation*. That is essential for the success of the working class revolution. A centralised Communist Party with vanguard workers from all nationalities is the key to solving the problem of nationalities (Lenin : *The National Question in Our Programme*, 1903, vol. VI, p. 463).

There is no coordination between Charubabu's thinking and Marxism on the mutual relationship between the advanced and oppressed nationalities in a country and the Communist Party. A few months before the Bolshevik revolution, Stalin had given a clear answer to this question and had indicated the way of solving the national problem.

Another implication of Charubabu's statement is that unless the national struggles of the Nagas, Mizos, Santhals etc. are united with his revolutionary party, they will remain separate and autonomous. Charubabu's group calls their party the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist). The rigid demarcation line that he has drawn up between his party and the nationalities seems to imply that his party has no place for them. Are the Nagas, Mizos, Garos, Santhals, Mundas etc. not Indian? If they do belong to India, then why do they have no place in the "Indian" party? And if they do find a place in the party then is it not their particular duty to direct these national struggles under the party leadership? (We must also remember that the working class of today has also emerged from the ranks of the tribals. Many tribals work in mines and industries. This is a significant factor in the Communist movement). The true Marxist party does not forge unity with the national struggle "from outside", it enters into it and unites the entire people against the common enemy.

The statement that "Communists are responsible for building up class struggle, not national struggle" is a veritable Koh-i-noor among all the gems of Charubabu's thoughts. He has mistakenly visualised a conflict between class struggle and

national struggle. Here too he is spreading ideas opposed to Mao in the name of Mao. Has not Mao said : "In the final analysis the national struggle is a theme for class struggle" ? (Mao's statement in support of the Negro struggle in America 1965). Has not Stalin said that the peasant problem is the problem of every nationality ? If it is peasant problem then is it not class struggle as well ?

Mao never talked in terms of an abstract unity "from outside" between Communists and the national movement, but he has clearly instructed that the Communists must actively help the struggles of the national minorities (Such help and not some slogans is the only way to establishing leadership and true militant unity).

The opinion of the Chinese Party on the national question has often been published. Even the other day *Deshabrati* has published Liu-Chun's article "The National Question and Class Struggle" from *Peking Review* (19 June 1969). Here Liu Chun clearly says that the Communist Party must lead the national struggles of the minority nationalities. Charubabu opposes the Chinese Party when he says that "Communists will not lead the national movement".

The question of India's democratic revolution is deeply related to the national problems. It was because of the ignorance, neglect and errors of the revisionist leaders of the Communist Parties that the struggles of the Indian national minorities could not become a part of the Indian revolutionary movement.

Today we have an era of the destruction of imperialism and national liberation. The national question in the imperialist era is a part of the general question of workers' revolution and proletarian dictatorship. In order to achieve national unity and complete liberation, the people of the oppressed nationalities must firmly make the national democratic revolution successful, destroy imperialism and uproot the rule of its agents. Then they will progress towards socialist revolution and destroy the entire class of exploiters and the system of exploitation. Mao has taught us that today's struggles for the establishment of national rights must never be surren-

dered to any part of the bourgeoisie. The Communist Party which is the vanguard of the working class must accept full responsibility for it.

15

CHARUBABU'S "THOUGHT" ON STUDENT AND YOUTH MOVEMENTS

As in his statements on peasant's and worker's movements, so about students and youths too Charubabu has come out with some startling virulent revolutionary utterances. He has said: "The imperialists and the reactionary ruling class had tried to nip the possibility of revolution in the bud and has put up the bait of college unions" (*Deshabrati*, 21 August, 1969).

The unusual ability that Charubabu has for evading historical truth is again borne out by this. From the very beginning of India's freedom struggle, students' organisations and their unions and movements have had a glorious role which they have even now to perform. But Charubabu has summarily dismissed this revolutionary heritage. Are student unions "baits" set up by imperialists? In that case we have to discard the entire Marxist-Leninist theory of dialectical materialism, which teaches us that in the present social system there are two fundamental, conflicting forces—imperialism and the entire people. The people build up different organisations to fight against imperialism—the party, trade unions, peasant associations, students' unions, youth associations etc. Imperialists are forever trying to capture or influence these mass organisations through their agents and sometime they do succeed. But are these mass organisations responsible for this, or is the lack of revolutionary leadership responsible? The task of the revolutionaries is to establish revolutionary leadership over these mass organisations and students' unions. Charubabu's theory of "bait" is not at all Marxist but Bakuninite petit-bourgeois revolutionism, an attempt to escape revolutionary responsibility in the name of revolution.

Charubabu has made many confusing statements about the

student movement but we can discuss only a few of them here. Charubabu has said that the college union "basically uphold an economist attitude in front of the revolutionary student body. So the college unions destroy the revolutionary genius of students and youths and these are great obstacles in the way of their identifying themselves with workers and peasants. As a result in most cases opportunism overwhelms union leadership, 'careerism' raises its head, the desire for leadership draw them towards opportunist 'unity' of many kinds and destroys their revolutionary principles". Inspired by these words of Charubabu his party put up posters in Calcutta—"Those who are involved in student unions are reactionaries".

It is perfectly true that revisionism is quite powerful among the students' unions. But is it the revolutionary path to discard them for that reason? Should we not rather fight against revisionism and opportunism from within? Does not the rejection of unions imply an escape after giving the student organisations up to the revisionists? Has Mao Tse-tung taught us to escape from our battle fields? Does not this principle isolate the revolutionary students from the general body of students?

Will such politics of anarchist isolationism transform petit-bourgeois students into responsible revolutionaries or will they rather give scope to their inherent petit-bourgeois anarchist tendencies?

Such sectarian politics is being spread in the name of 'peasant revolution'. There is no doubt that it is better that an increasingly larger number of students and workers should go to the villages to work for the peasant revolution. Already quite a large number of youths have left well paid jobs and gone to the villages. Some brilliant students have given up prospects for well-paid jobs and are working among the peasants and many others preparing to follow suit. But can every revolutionary student and worker go to the village despite their best intentions? Many are forced to stay back in the cities. Those who stay in the cities, at least for the time being, also have innumerable revolutionary tasks to perform here—for

example, movements about students' problems, democratic and cultural movements, the trade union movement as well as movements in factory and slum areas. All these are essential for the success of the peasant revolution. The negative programme of action that Charubabu's group has adopted is neither strengthening the revolutionary peasant movement nor helping the democratic movement in the city.

Is not the factional politics of Charubabu's group responsible for the disunity and isolation among students, especially the Naxalite students? They have not been able to overcome their narrow, factional attitude during the task of party-building and they have failed to unite all the groups. Among the students too, they brought this factional politics. Wherever they have gone among the students they have created a number of factions with some hand-picked students of their own. On account of their own anarchist viewpoint they have not been able to provide any positive programme of action to the student movement. As a result a lot of confusion is being created among the students, their determination is breaking down and internal feuds are gaining in strength. As an example we may refer to the 'armed struggle' between the students of two Medical Colleges on 2nd August 1969.

Most of the students come from petit-bourgeois families having imbibed such ideas. Imperialist oppression makes them turn towards the revolutionary camp. Anarchist thinking such as Bakuninism, Trotskyism, Guevarism is quite strong among many of them although interest in Marxism too is no less strong. Revisionism and fascism also attract many of them. They may lean towards fascism in the absence of revolutionary leadership, but again if they do get inspired by revolutionary thinking then they may perform a very crucial function in the democratic revolution. That is why a positive programme of action for students based on Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao is so essential.

Starting from the university authorities, all the governing bodies of schools and colleges are centres of reaction and corruption. They actively help to keep alive the semi-colonial, semi-feudal social order in India. Many of the university

teachers frequently go to America and are closely linked with American imperialism. An important task of the students is carrying on ceaseless campaign against these strongholds of reaction, Students' movement is also necessary against their syllabus, an outdated examination system, etc. 80-90% of the peasants in India are illiterate. The spread of universal free education should become an important part of the students' movement. Instead of drawing attention to such positive, organisational activities in the context of the democratic revolution, Charubabu's group has brought petit-bourgeois revolutionism, a negative point of view among the students which destroy their revolutionary strength and qualities and help the reactionaries in the final analysis.

It is undoubtedly an "original" concept of Charubabu that the student unions are responsible for crushing the students' revolutionary genius, for injecting economism into them and for preventing them from identifying themselves with workers and peasants. But there is no reason that the concept should be valid just because it is original. About three or four years back the student movement had become very strong in West Bengal. Students in Calcutta University, Jadavpur University, North Bengal University, Presidency College and Krishnagore College had opened up a new chapter full of great possibilities in the revolutionary movement and had started to move forward keeping pace with the revolutionary student movements in France, America, Germany, Japan and Italy. At that time the Naxalbari peasant movement began. It had a great impact on the entire body of students and inspired all the students. The hold of revisionism and neo-revisionism over the students was eroded. This was a golden opportunity for mobilising a unified movement of all the students in the context of the peasant revolution and on the basis of students' problems, the problems of education and the problems of the cultural movement. But Charubabu's group failed to take advantage of this situation. They could not rise above their narrow sectarianism even in this new revolutionary atmosphere.

The question is why, despite a favourable situation, the student movement in West Bengal was shattered. And this

happened at a time when the international student movement was daily becoming more and more revolutionary and the example of the revolutionary student movement in East Bengal was also in front of us ! Why have the Naxalite students split up today into different groups ? Why could they not unite themselves and then unite all the students ? Why are students today divided into so many groups and are fighting suicidally among themselves with bombs and pistols and are helping the class enemy ? Who is responsible for that ?

If the students are united, then they can constitute a tremendous force in the democratic revolution. But how Charubabu hates unity is clear from his above statements. Let him avoid opportunist unity by all means, but is there no such thing as revolutionary unity ? Is it not a main task for revolutionary students to fight for revolutionary unity against revisionism ? Can that task be performed if the student unions are given up to revisionism ? Charubabu himself has said repeatedly that a splendid revolutionary situation exists in India today. If that is so then it is only natural that millions of students, workers and peasants will be united under revolutionary leadership. How else can the absolute leadership of the revolutionary party be established among the people ?

Finally Charubabu has given a clear call to the students : "Identify yourselves with poor and landless peasants and with workers, become as one with them." Where he failed to unite students of the same way of thinking, failed to mobilise all the students, where he teaches students who follow him in the belief that apart from themselves no other revolutionary exists, all others are reactionary—it is mere anarchist romanticism in this situation to think that the students with all their sectarianism and arrogance can identify themselves with workers and peasants. The mobilisation of millions of workers, peasants, students and tribals is necessary for the democratic and peasant revolution. The main task for Communist revolutionaries today is to unite the workers, peasants, tribals and students together and with one other. The students' slogan for solving their problems and for the democratic

revolution should be—‘Unite, unite, unite’. Only then can they become as one with workers and peasants.

16

WHITHER REVOLUTION

Revolutions have occurred in many countries and as a result those countries have progressed very far. But no revolution has occurred in India even though it is so necessary here. A primitive social order, a semi-colonial, semi-feudal political and economic order, massively block India's path to progress and constitute the main reason behind the exploitation, poverty and misery of the masses. That is why the main and the greatest task of the Indian masses today is to utterly demolish this reactionary social, political and economic order and to establish in the interests of the masses, a new social order free from exploitation. Such an order can be established today only through a democratic revolution under working-class leadership and proletarian dictatorship.

There had been many opportunities for having a revolution in India. The great revolt of 1857-58 failed because of the lack of correct leadership despite the valour, heroism and self-sacrifice of millions of men and women—peasants and labouring people. After the Second World War, the R. I. N. Mutiny and the peasant revolts in Telengana, the Hajong region and in Kakdwip had again brought the possibility of a great revolution near us. But because of the betrayal of the leaders, and especially of the revisionist and ultra-Leftist leaders of the Communist Parties, it was not possible to fulfil the promise of these opportunities.

The entire world is divided into two warring camps today—one is the international reactionary camp under the leadership of American imperialism and the other is the international revolutionary camp under China's leadership. After the death of Stalin the revisionist leadership of the Khrushchev-Kosygin-Brezhnev clique has transformed the Soviet Union into a social-imperialist state that follows the imperialist policy of the Tsar. Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia and the

border clashes with China are examples of that. This reactionary clique in the Soviet Union regards China as the main enemy and carries on military preparations as well as intrigues with America to crush China's revolutionary power. For many other reasons too, the internal crisis of the Soviet Union is gradually intensifying.

American imperialism has been struck a massive blow by the heroic people of Vietnam and is now facing final defeat. As a result the American people too is revolting. Asia, Africa, Latin America—nowhere can American imperialism keep the masses subdued and world revolution is moving step by step towards final victory.

Just as day by day imperialism is being trapped by the deepening crisis, China the centre of world revolution, has strengthened the basis of socialism and proletarian dictatorship and has internally moved towards rapid progress. Workers' Cultural Revolution in China and its 9th Party Congress are the guarantee for Marxism-Leninism, national liberation struggles and socialist movements not just in China but all over the world.

As a part of this total revolutionary situation, the revolutionary crisis in India too is deepening again and greater possibilities for revolution are drawing near. Indian economy, dependent on foreign imperialist capital, is now facing a deadlock. In the semi-colonial, semi-feudal Indian social order, on the one hand the rich are becoming richer, and on the other hand the poor are becoming poorer; unemployment is increasing, the exploitation of poor and landless peasants is growing, not much effort is being made to remove mass illiteracy and the country's education, the state of health and housing are all declining rapidly.

This deep-rooted crisis in India is not just restricted to the economic sphere but is a total one. Indian administration is gradually breaking down and coming to a standstill. Corruption is growing and spreading from top to bottom. Every political party is shattered by this crisis. The Congress, the main party of the ruling classes, is now split up and is in

disarray. The Jana Sangh, the Swatantra and other reactionary parties are also facing a great crisis. The two revisionist and neo-revisionist parties and other so called Leftist parties have been totally swamped by parliamentarianism and economism. Their leaders can find no other way but to be the appendages of the owning classes, to go in frequently for elections or to form the effeminate United Front ministry. The bankruptcy of these parties, torn apart by internal feuds is now becoming increasingly clear to the masses who are realising that there is no way out of this crisis except for a total, revolutionary solution.

A hallmark of the current revolutionary situation in India is that the struggle of workers, peasants, tribals and students is advancing rapidly and millions of people who have never before participated in politics have woken up from their age-long slumber and are taking an active part in the mass movement with their own demands. But the main weakness of this great and all-encompassing mass struggle is that it lacks revolutionary leadership. When the masses are progressing at a tremendous pace, the revisionist and opportunist leaders are drawing back in fear and are putting the brake on the mass movement. These corrupt leaders are trying their best in their own narrow, personal interests, to keep this movement restricted within the bounds of parliamentarianism and economism.

The Communist Party of India has been formed to bring about the revolution in India, to effect a fundamental change in Indian economic, political, social and cultural life, to establish a social order without exploitation, to eradicate all social differences like caste, religious and class differences, to create equality among all human beings. Many of India's greatest intellectuals, workers and peasants were attracted by this great ideal, had joined this Party and had sacrificed themselves for the Party and the revolution. But the Party leadership had repeatedly betrayed this ideal, had sacrificed mass interests and basic principles to compromise with vested interests and instead of building up the Party as a revolutionary one, it has made it into a revisionist Party to

direct it towards parliamentarianism and economism. The revolt against these treacherous Party leadership in 1962 by Party cadres and the "Marxist" Communist Party that was set up had also failed to solve the basic problem. A band of opportunist, phrase-mongering leaders captured the leadership of this "Marxist" Party as well. There is not much ideological difference between the Communist Party of India and the "Marxist" Communist Party—both are restricted to parliamentarianism and economism, there is no place for the problems of the coming revolution in the thinking of their leaders, and all subjective and objective preparations for the revolution and the capture of state power are totally absent. The leaders and the programme of both the parties have made them into electioneering parties. Their aim and all their activities are directed towards going from one election to another, to from the United Front Ministry, to occupy the seats of the ministry which have been sold out to vested interests, to feud among themselves like cats and dogs about the share of ministerial power. They also aim at spreading the factional interests and feuds of the leaders like an infectious disease among the masses, to turn students against students in clashes, attacks and murders and at clearing the way for President's rule, rule by the military and the police, by fascists.

The peasant revolt at Naxalbari again showed the revolutionary path to Communist revolutionaries and to the masses. Among the thinking and militant cadres of the "Marxist" Communist Party, among students and youths and many others, it created a tremendous stir. Many Communist revolutionaries left the Party but many remained in the Party. This was a golden opportunity to unify this tremendous force and build up a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Party. Why revolutionaries could not exploit the opportunity and failed to form a Marxist-Leninist Party has been discussed in this book. It has also been shown that the very first reason behind this failure was the weakness of revolutionaries in Marxist ideology and their interest in petit-bourgeois revolutionism.

Wherever the petit-bourgeoisie is numerically strong and

the revolutionary organisation and ideology of the working class have not been firmly established, there petit-bourgeois revolutionism, anarchism etc. become powerful in different forms and become even more dangerous for the labour movement than revisionism. When Lenin was forming the Bolshevik Party in Russia he had to wage a powerful ideological struggle against the Socialist Revolutionary Party, the Narodniks and other forms of petit-bourgeois revolutionism. In China too, Mao had to face the same problem and he too fought severely against it to establish the revolutionary ideology of Marxism within the Chinese Communist Party.

In the present day, in almost all countries of the capitalist world, there has been another powerful wave of petit-bourgeois revolutionism against the revisionism of the Communist Parties, based on The Guevara's theory of guerrilla war. These revolutionaries have adopted the principle of armed struggles and guerilla war. They have denied working-class leadership and its revolutionary role and as an alternative to Marxism-Leninism and Mao's principles, they have talked of a new kind of revolution. (The "Marxist" Party leaders today in India too are using Che Guevara as an alternative to the Thought of Mao.)

A hallmark of one part of the Indian revolutionaries is that they are influenced by Guevarism—the Bakuninism of today—whether consciously or unconsciously, and they spread it in the name of Mao. We have given many examples to how their leaders are trying to destroy Marxist theory and ideology by wrong and false propaganda. Let us take up another recent example :

Charu Mazumdar has written : "The Chairman has said ; the more study the more foolish you become" (*Deshabrati* 5 March 1970). Mao Tse-tung never said anything like this. He has said just the opposite, not once or twice but innumerable times. Like Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, Mao too has said repeatedly that a fool cannot make a revolution, one has to critically acquire all the knowledge of the social sciences that the revolutionaries have access to. This was how Marxist theory, world's best social science, has developed.

Mao has asked us again and again to absorb this universal truth through the history of our own countries and through revolutionary struggle. They have also said that Marxism is a science that has to be studied ceaselessly and this weapon has to be sharpened all the time for revolution, for socialism.

Charubabu has further said that in the present situation there is no need for reading theoretical literature, just two or three writings of Mao will be enough ; then go into "action" and start the politics of "elimination". These words mean Charubabu's cult of personality, commandism, and what Stalin used to call "yes-manship"—blind obedience. Charubabu has ruled out what is most necessary for the revolutionaries today—ideological discussion.

Such irresponsible anarchist statements by a revolutionary leader is a great crime in a country where the revolutionary theory of Marxism has practically never crystallised, where in the absence of revolutionary theory, opportunities for revolution have failed again and again. This attitude is extremely harmful for the revolutionary movement and constitutes an unhealthy, unfortunate, anti-Marxist trend in it. The major reason why in the past the leaders could for forty or forty-five years lead the party along revisionist, opportunist or ultra-Leftist adventurist lines was that Marxist revolutionary ideology was (and still is) extremely weak among party cadres, however honest and militant they might be.

The essence of Lenin's lifelong struggle is that there can be no revolution without a revolutionary theory. He has said : "*Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.* This truth has to be stated most emphatically since today propaganda for fashionable opportunism is going along with illusions about the narrowest aspect of practical activities" (*What is to be Done*, 1902, Vol. V, p. 369). Lenin has further said about ideological struggle : "Russia could acquire the only correct revolutionary theory of Marxism through a half a century long, incomparably painful mental struggle and self-sacrifice, a unique revolutionary heroism, great capacity for work, through failure and dejection assess-

ment and reassessment and through a comparison with this European experience" (*Left Wing Communism : An Infantile Disorder*, 1920, Vol. XXXI. p. 25).

In order to have a revolution in India one has to study the only scientific theory of revolution which is Marxism-Leninism, to assimilate it through the experience of class struggle in Indian history, to consolidate it on Indian soil, to derive lessons from the history of revolutions in other countries and to apply it through a concrete analysis of the concrete situation in India. This is what Lenin had done in Russia and Mao in China. Our store of revolutionary theory is negligible. The influence and tradition of Gandhism, revisionism and religion is quite old and very powerful in India and workers, peasants and intellectuals are not free from them. Our party leaders had never fought them ideologically. From the beginning of Russian and Chinese labour movements and from the first stages of party building there, Lenin, Stalin and Mao's leadership had directed them along the lines of revolutionary struggle and as a result in these countries a revolutionary tradition had been initiated from the beginning. India has no such powerful heritage. There have been revolts in India, too, against revisionism but we had gone over to Leftist sectarianism in order to fight it, and to check this Leftist sectarianism we have once again come back to revisionism. Then having revolted once more against revisionism we have let ourselves be carried away by extreme petit-bourgeois revolutionism. Once Ranadive had sent out the slogans of a Trotskyist, Titoist revolution ! Today Charu Mazumdar is again calling out revolutionary slogans of a Bakuninite nature ! Then we had failed to check Ranadive's adventurism. Will that happen again ? Many honest revolutionaries have joined the "Marxist-Leninist" Party, they cannot avoid answering this question.

There is no short-cut to revolution, there can be no revolution without hard work. Revolution cannot be made with some slogans, hush-hush talk can lead to the terrorist politics of "elimination" but not to revolution. Revolution needs the dedicated endeavour of hundreds and thousands of revolutionaries, the unity between revolutionary theory and

practice. A revolutionary programme of action can only succeed where the revolutionary theory is correct. Revolution needs the mobilisation of not thousands or lakhs, but of millions of people and their united struggle.

We can mention in this context that Marx's *Das Kapital* was first published in German in 1867. The first translation in a foreign language that came out five years later was in Russian. Lenin has said about the keen eagerness with which contemporary Russian revolutionary intellectuals were assimilating Marxism—"One after another many Marxist book had come out, Marxist journals and newspapers were started and almost everyone called himself a Marxist. Marxists were flattered and honoured and because Marxist books were sold out extraordinarily quickly publishers were delighted" (*What is to be Done*, Vol. V, p. 361).

It was not without reason that the first successful workers' revolution took place in Russia. This was due to a strenuous assimilation of revolutionary theory, uncommon capacity for work, self-sacrifice and firm determination. A similar long struggle lay behind the Chinese revolution as well. In contrast how little Indian "Communist" leaders had tried to acquire revolutionary theory, how meagre is their work and self-sacrifice. In this context, remembering the prospects of the coming revolution we have first to realise the amount of dedication in theory and practice that is required from the Indian Communist revolutionaries today.

Naxalbari has once again shown us the path of revolution and has liberated many Communist revolutionaries from crippling revisionism.

The great contribution of Naxalbari is that like Telengana it has (1) taken revolutionary politics to the villages and has reached it to millions of peasants, (2) has upheld before the masses the battle for the capture of state power through armed struggle. The explosion which was the work of Telengana and Naxalbari peasants had its roots in the Indian revolutionary situation. Many such explosions are in store. It is the task of Communist revolutionaries to earn the capacity to lead

them ideologically, to direct them along the right lines and to guide them towards a successful conclusion.

The first task of Communist revolutionaries in the present revolutionary situation in India is to unite themselves on the basis of revolutionary theory and practice. The arrogant petit-bourgeois attitude that "we are the only revolutionaries" is the main obstacle to unity. Charubabu is instructing students and youths—"say this proudly—only the central leadership of this revolutionary party understand Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao and apply it correctly. No one else understands anything, no one else can possibly understand a thing" (*Deshabrati*, 5 March 1970). Such arrogance, such rigidity, such a crude mentality of the upstart petit-bourgeois revolutionary is the main enemy of a revolutionary attitude, the main obstacle to the building of a revolutionary party. Revolutionaries have first to discard this pernicious attitude in order to follow the revolutionary path, they have to carry on criticism and self-criticism in thought and action on the basis of ideology and to build up the party in this manner on the basis of the unity of revolutionary groups and classes. Many of the Communist revolutionaries who are outside the CPI(ML) believe in unity. Many of us talk of unity, advise the masses to unite but our handful of revolutionaries do not unite. We too do not go in for self-criticism—mere abstract slogans for unity are not enough, we must find out an effective way for giving it concrete shape, we must always strive for it.

Apart from Communist revolutionaries, among the Communist Party of India within the United Front, the Forward Bloc, the RSP, the SUC and particularly among the "Marxist" Communist Party, there are many honest and militant workers, peasants and intellectuals revolutionaries. Many of them have not yet realised the extent of opportunism, parliamentarianism and economism among their leaders, they are not even aware of the revisionist character of their programme. But it will be wrong to think that they will remain in this state forever and blindly follow their opportunist leaders. They have acquired adequate experience from the last two United

Front Governments, from mass-struggle, movements for land and crop grabbing, and they are having many doubts and quarries and their illusions are beginning to disappear. The internal contradictions within these parties, particularly the "Marxist" Party, are becoming sharp. Communist revolutionaries have to work in unity with these cadres in the mass movement and they have to initiate these cadres in revolutionary ideology and in the politics of the capture of state power.

In Vietnam the Communist Party under Ho Chi Minh's leadership has shown how on the basis of revolutionary ideology, the entire masses can be united for the democratic revolution against imperialism and feudalism. He has also shown how it is possible to fight against the powerful military forces of the mighty American imperialism and its deadly weapons of every kind, to conduct a long-drawn-out guerilla and mass war and how to finally and irrevocably defeat the enemy.

Communist revolutionaries in India too have to prepare for the coming revolution. The way to prepare for the democratic revolution is to understand: (1) that the main enemy of the Indian masses are imperialism and feudalism, (2) that we have to give top priority to Marxism-Leninism and the ideology of the Thought of Mao, we have to wage ideological warfare and build up a true Communist Party on the basis of this ideology, (3) that all Communist revolutionaries have to be united within this Party on the basis of ideology, (4) that we have to take up peasant revolution as our central task, we have to set up revolutionary bases in the villages and concentrate on building liberated zones, (5) that we have to organise working-class leadership in this democratic revolution and prepare it for capturing state power, (6) that we have to organise a united democratic and cultural movement of the entire people for the revolution, (7) that we have to take part in trade unions, peasant associations, students' unions, to transform economic consciousness into revolutionary consciousness, to fight against revisionism and for unity, (8) and that we have to take part in the different national struggles in India and establish working-class leadership over them.

We have failed many time in the past. We have to remove the reasons that were responsible for our failure in order to prepare for the revolution. We have to build up a true Communist Party and come forward with firm determination —this time we are going to win.

II

INTERVIEW
of
PROMODE SENGUPTA
with
Dr. A. K. GUPTA
for Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi
(4th February, 1971)

MAIN POINTS COVERED IN THE INTERVIEW

[Frustration with Gandhi's Non-cooperation movement (1921) and joining the revolutionaries; terrorist-revolutionary activities with Anantahari Mitra (1923-27); contacts with Nalini Gupta, Saumyendranath Tagore and Muzaffar Ahmad and their position in terrorist movement (1926); trip to England for studies (1927) ; an account of the rejection of the application for sitting for the I. C. S. ; renewal of contacts with Nalini Gupta and Saumyendranath Tagore at Berlin; fascism & communism; an account of travelling from Berlin to Paris and discovery of arms by the French police; M. N. Roy using the passport of one Mahmud for coming to India; Indians including students, Saklatvala and Krishna Menon and India's independence movement in England; attitude of Indian students in England towards Gandhi during Round Table Conference; reception to Rabindranath Tagore in England on his way to the Soviet Union and C. F. Andrews' attempt to prevent Tagore to go to the Soviet Union, impressions of Jawaharlal Nehru's and Subhas Chandra Bose's visits to England (1935-36); Progressive Writers' Association; participation of Indians in the Spanish Civil War; sending Marxist literature to India; Indians in England, Communist Party of Great Britain and the Communist International; recollections of his stay as a student at Paris (1937-42); World Peace Conference at Paris; European events including Second World War; discussions with Subhas Chandra Bose at Paris relating to his plan to form the I. N. A. and joining hands with Nazi Germany (1942); C. P. I.'s support of Britain during the War; assessment of C. P. I and Indian revolution.]

Interview

A. K. Gupta : Would you please give us your recollections of the years between 1923 and 1927, when you became involved in the terrorist organisation of Krishnanagar ?

Promode Sengupta : For the earliest recollections of our political movement in Krishnanagar, I have to go back to 1921. In that year, students in schools and colleges came out to join the Non-cooperation movement. The day we came out of our classes, we demonstrated on the streets of the city. We also became disciples of Gandhi, and started wearing *khaddar*. We took the *charkha* to the villages, and also somehow became believers in Gandhi's non-violent Non-cooperation movement. Gandhi, at that time, promised that he would attain *swaraj* within a year and, since we were young, we believed him, and joined his movement wholeheartedly. When Gandhi withdrew the Non-cooperation movement as a result of the Chauri Chaura incident, we were shocked and disillusioned. In fact, we became frustrated.

During that time, Anantahari Mitra, a revolutionary (he openly worked as a Congress worker), came to Krishnanagar. So, at first, we did not know him properly, but after the Chauri Chaura incident, we became more intimate with him. He explained to us why the non-violent Non-cooperation movement could not succeed, and that Gandhi would go on betraying the movements again and again. Anantahari Mitra began to convert us to revolutionary methods, which were followed by the terrorists of those days.

In 1923, I passed my matriculation examination, and by that time Anantahari Mitra had gathered quite a number of students around him. We also started insisting on forming a group of our own in Krishnanagar. So, he agreed; and one day,

five of us were initiated into his terrorist group in front of Goddess *Kali*. This is how our revolutionary activities started in Krishnanagar. Within a very short time, we were given a revolver to practice shooting. For this, we had to cross the river and go into the hills. Some kind of cracker or bomb preparation was also taught to us. And soon, we started insisting on organising a big action. We were no more satisfied with revolver practice. We wanted some action, a large scale political robbery particularly, but Anantahari Mitra insisted that before we undertook such action, we should practice it in our own homes. He said : "Charity begins at home". So, before we could lay our hands on public funds, we must do it in our own homes. Mr. Mitra also said that to organise a large scale action, we must have more fire-arms. To buy pistols, we needed money. We all agreed that we should do our own bit and for that, some of us, who were a little well-off, agreed to take initiative in our own homes first, and in that way we got quite a handsome amount of money and ornaments. With that money, we bought two revolvers and a pistol.

From Krishnanagar, there was a postal mail service to Navadwip. Everyday a horse-carriage used to take the mail as well as money from Krishnanagar to Navadwip. One day, we got the information that a very large sum of money was being carried by that mail ; so, two of us attacked that mail and other things. That was the first successful action.

Then, after that, we began to prepare for further action. At that time, preparations in other parts of Bengal were going on, and we often came in touch with other groups like the *Jugantar* and the *Anushilan* in Chittagong, and in many other places. However, our preparations on a larger scale were going on. In the meantime, revolutionary groups spread to neighbouring towns like Ranaghat, Navadwip, Santipur and other places. In our district itself, our revolutionary organisation spread quite a lot and it became an important section of all the terrorist groups in Bengal. Our reputation also spread, to some extent, to other places. The role of the Krishnagar group,

particularly of Anantahari Mitra, was to bring about unity among the various sections of the terrorist groups, which were divided into several factions. That Mitra succeeded in his efforts to bring about unity can be seen from the Dakshineswar Bomb Case.

On 10th November 1925, Anantahari Mitra was arrested in Krishnanagar and taken to prison. But before that, he was in Dakshineswar, where they had taken a house and where revolutionaries, from different parts of Bengal and outside, were staying, particularly those who needed medical treatment. For instance, probably, I met Rajendra Nath Lahiri there. He was also charged in the Kakori Conspiracy Case.

A. K. G. : Where did Rajendra Nath Lahiri hail from ?

P. S. : He hailed from Banaras. He was also arrested at Dakshineswar. Although he represented U. P., he was intimately connected with our activities in Bengal, and particularly with Anantahari Mitra. Rajendra Nath was arrested in connection with the Kakori Conspiracy Case, while another revolutionary, Promode Ranjan Chowdhury, was also caught in Dakshineswar. Promode Chowdhury came from Chittagong, and so we were also connected with the Chittagong group. After the Dakshineswar Bomb Case and the subsequent incidents in the jail were over, Anantahari Mitra and Promode Chowdhury of Chittagong were hanged. Now, that instance alone shows that the efforts to bring about unity among revolutionary groups were proceeding very fast. We had already succeeded to a large extent, although, at that time, some of our old leaders belonging to the *Anushilan* and the *Jugantar* groups were quarrelling with one another and were trying to emphasise on their own personal leadership; the younger generation did not like that sort of thing, and all the time they pressed for unity, more strength and bigger actions. Later on, of course, other things happened like the Chittagong Armoury Raid, which I am not competent to tell you. I shall only confine myself to the nature of our revolutionary activities in Krishnanagar in Nadia district.

Although Anantahari Mitra was a revolutionary, yet all the time he insisted that we must participate more and more in social work, particularly among untouchables and poor sections of the people. He used to tell us all the time that the revolution could not succeed without the help of the people, and that the revolution was meant for the people. But, of course, in discussions, the idea of 'people' was still rather vague and sentimental. The conception was that we must go to the people: they were poor, we must help them, those sort of sentimental ideas. The ideas of politicizing the people had not come to us yet, but anyhow, we had organised three night schools for the *dhangars*, *mochis*, *doms* in three different quarters of Krishnanagar. We had also *Davidra Bhandar Satkar Samitis* by which we tried to serve the people as best as we could. Moreover, we considered *Satkar Samitis* part of our revolutionary training because the people of Krishnanagar had a tradition, that anybody who died in Krishnanagar must be taken ten miles away to Navadwip and cremated there on the banks of the Ganges. So, our idea was to carry the dead bodies to Navadwip, in order to make ourselves more hardy and also, of course, to be of service to the people.

There was another aspect which I must emphasise : In order to give us political education, Anantahari Mitra insisted on organising a library where we could get progressive political literature. So, within a short time, we collected funds and organised a library called *Sadhana* library. At that time, there was no other library in that city. And whoever saw that library, was greatly impressed and said that it was one of the best libraries they had seen. But unfortunately in February 1926, when the police arrested many of us, they also raided our library and took away all the books. By the side of the library, we had an *akhara* where we used to teach *lathi khela*, sword play, *kusti*, boxing, *ju-jitsu* and all these things. We used to give quite a good deal of importance to physical fitness.

In 1926, when we were quite advanced in our activities and had spread our organisations all over the district, we organised a swimming competition from Krishnanagar to Navadwip by the

river which is twelve miles in length. About twenty-five young men from all over the district joined that competition. It created a real stir throughout the district. It was a great success. There was great enthusiasm, among the young people particularly, but unfortunately, that was the first and last occasion when we could hold such a competition. We were arrested soon after that ; no other effort was made to or cause such competitions any more.

Apart from our social service, and our night schools, we did another thing which has some political and social significance. Anantahari was a disciple of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. He himself was very religious minded and prayed everyday to Goddess *Kali*. But some of us had begun to question religion, the caste system and some of us even showed a tendency towards atheism. We had long discussions with Anantahari on these points. In any case, there were certain social aspects. On the occasion of Ramakrishna's birthday, we used to organise a feast where *khihari* was served. The untouchables of the city, *mochis* and *doms*, and the poorer sections of Muslims were invited to this feast. We used to sit together and eat together and, thereby, openly challenged the caste system. At first, this sort of thing created a lot of commotion in the town, and many people censured our activity of eating with the untouchables. The parents of many of us did not like it, but we stuck to eat and continued our activity every year. These are only a few instances to show that those young men, who joined the revolutionary groups, were not only interested in terrorist activity, but they were also consciously or unconsciously trying to think about the solution of poverty, untouchability and such problems. In this way, we come up to 1926

In 1926, many, not only in Krishnanagar, but in many other parts of Bengal also, started terrorist activities. This as well as many other influences were penetrating into our revolutionary groups. I remember, in 1926, when I came to Calcutta, I was given some literature which come from Europe, and when I opened that literature, I found that it was the journal

published by M. N. Roy from Geneva. The name of the paper was *Vanguard*. We were now gradually coming in touch with the international revolutionary movement. I remember, in 1926, I wrote in my college magazine—(this college was a government college and we had a magazine of forty-eight pages)—an article entitled “Lenin and Bolshevism”. Now, at this time, I do not remember what I wrote in that article but the significance of it was that consciously or unconsciously, we were already being attracted, in those days towards a bigger and more scientific idea. In the year 1926, as you know, Bolshevism or Lenin were not very much known here. We did not know at all, at that time, about these movements in Europe. There was press censor. The press did not give enough information about these things. As a result of general aversion to these movements we were almost ignorant about them. Thereafter, there was news about them but it was mainly criticism of Bolshevism and Lenin. Although we wanted to know more about them, yet we were in the dark due to lack of literature. This shows, that in spite of all these difficulties, we were doing our best to know about this new ideology of communism. Then, international ideas also came in our way. As we were terrorist revolutionaries, naturally we were greatly attracted to the Irish independence movement. I remember, that I wrote a book on the Irish liberation movement. In that book I emphasised not only terrorist attempts in the cities mainly, but I also gave sufficient importance to the peasant movement and particularly to the workers’ movement. I remember that I based it on James Connolly’s book on Irish revolution. James Connolly was a socialist and was executed soon afterwards. Anyway, this is only to show that our attention was already drawn towards Marxism. Many of the young revolutionaries of those days were no more satisfied with the religious views of our old leaders ; they also wanted to have a more scientific outlook for their revolutionary movement. That is why there were efforts to come in touch with the advanced revolutionary ideas of Europe.

Then, in 1926, it also happened that important revolutionary leaders of that time used to come frequently to Krishnana

gar, and establish contact with us. Bipin Ganguly was a frequent visitor to Krishnanagar. At that time, he was underground. There was a warrant against him. Often, he spent about a month or two at a stretch in Krishnanagar. Then, there were many others who came to Krishnanagar and in that way we spread our activities all over Bengal. Then, in 1925-26, there was the Dakshineswar Bomb Case. In that connection, our leader Anantahari was arrested.

After some weeks, one day, there was a big raid in February, 1926. On that very day, about six of us from Krishnanagar were arrested and taken away to different parts of Bengal. I was arrested under an ordinance and was taken to Faridpur district and kept as an internee in a village called Silchar near Madaripur sub-division. Now, when I was arrested, I was fourth year student. I applied for permission to appear for my B. A. examination, and was permitted to sit at the Faridpur centre. I passed and then towards the end of that year, in December, I was allowed to go to London for further studies.

A K G. : Now, what about this Nalini Gupta, Saumyendranath Tagore ? Did you have an opportunity of meeting Nalini Gupta, who at this time, had visited Calcutta on behalf of M. N. Roy ?

P. S. : As I told you that many revolutionaries used to come to Krishnanagar, Nalini Gupta also once came to Krishnanagar, I think, in the early part of 1926. Then, before Anantahari was arrested, once I was sent to Calcutta for certain important work. I was given an address, in Dwarkanath Tagore Lane. When I went to the house, I found that it was Rabindranath Tagore's house. And, the person who opened the door was Saumyendranath Tagore. I told him a code word and he called me into his house. I was taken to a room and there I found, besides Saumyendranath, two other persons. One was Nalini Gupta, whom I had met before. Another was Muzaffar Ahmad. Ahmad, I had known before, because I visited him in his party's office, and, thereby, I came to know him also. So, after some discussion, I was sent to that place to get some formula from Nalini Gupta for bomb preparation. I got all those

formulae and some other things and I came away. However, later on, a question came to my mind.; how was Muzaffar Ahmad in that group? Muzaffar Ahmad was supposed to have founded the Communist Party in 1924 and this was the middle of 1925. So, being a founder of the Communist Party, how could he be implicated in terroristic activities? I have not been able to solve that riddle even today.

A.K.G. : What was Saumyendranath's political position vis-a-vis the terrorist movement of that time?

P.S. : So far as I know, this was a transitional period, that is, many old terrorist revolutionaries were looking towards communism, and I believe Saumyendranath Tagore was also losing faith in terrorism at that time and was coming towards communism; and by coming into contact with Nalini Gupta, their progress was more rapid. They probably had started calling themselves communists, since by that time, many old revolutionaries were turning towards communism. But at that time in Bengal, at least so far as I remember, there was no sharp demarcation between our old revolutionaries and communists. As a matter of fact, at that time, we did not understand what communism was really supposed to be, and as I said before, because of inadequate literature, we were not well acquainted with Marxist theories.

A.K.G. : Mr. Sengupta, in 1928 or at the end of 1927, you visited England. Could you please let us have your memories of Indian students in England and other prominent Indians like Saklatvala?

P.S. : As I said before, I was allowed to go to London for further studies in December 1927. When I went to England, I decided that for two or three years, I would not take part in any political movement, and that I would devote all my time to studies. I had also decided that I would sit for the I. C. S. examination. I had then three chances for that examination and the first time, I was allotted to sit, but my result was not very good. So I prepared myself for the second chance. When I filled in the application form, I got a reply from the Civil Service Examination Commission that they could not allow me

to sit for the examination under Clause 6 of the rules. When I saw their rules, I found that Clause 6 was something like this : that if the Civil Service Commissioner found that somebody was of bad character, they would not allow that person to sit for the examination. Therefore, being a bad character, I was not allowed to sit for that examination. Now, I do not know why, after I had been given a passport from India. I suddenly become a bad character in the eyes of the imperialists. Later on, of course, I could see some reasons, probably the police reports came late, and also some letters probably fell into the hands of the police. When I was studying for sometime in London and in Oxford, Saumyendranath Tagore, whom I had met before in Calcutta, wrote to me from Berlin almost every week, urging me to come to Berlin for some urgent work. For sometime, I did not take any notice of those letters, but later on I probably answered, telling Saumyendranath Tagore that I was very busy with my studies, and that I would consider when I could come to Berlin. Anyhow, such letters must have been intercepted by the police, and that probably one of the reasons why I became a bad character. However, when I really became a bad character in the eyes of the British authorities, I thought that why not become a bad character in an efficient way. So, I went to Berlin and met again not only Saumyendranath Tagore but also an old acquaintance Nalini Gupta, and quite a number of other Indians in Berlin. I had a very interesting time there, because that was the first time when I saw actually the struggle between communism and fascism. What that struggle meant, I could see almost everyday from Charlottenbarg area. Apart from that, this anti-fascist struggle became a very valuable experience for me in my future work. The main purpose for which I was called to Berlin, was that Nalini Gupta and Saumyendranath had arranged with some arms manufacturing firms for exporting fire-arms to India on a large scale. I was told that they had already established contacts and everything was arranged for sending these materials, on a large

scale, to India, but they wanted some more contacts in India and they thought that I would be able to arrange that. Nalini Gupta and Saumyendranath both told me that since they had left India much earlier than I had, I was coming fresh from India, therefore, I might have contacts in India and it would be possible for me to arrange the transport of these arms. Then, since I had already begun to think in terms of communism, after coming to England, I hesitated and opposed their idea vehemently. For about two or three days, I had long discussions with them and they tried their best to convince me but I resisted. My point was that communism was opposed to terrorism, and therefore as a communist, I could not participate in such activities. They tried to convince me and said that communism meant a revolution—a popular revolution. It was not of course, such a terrorist revolution, but nevertheless it was a popular revolution, and a popular revolution must have arms and, therefore, I should not oppose this transport of arms to India. For fighting the imperialists, the people of India required arms and, therefore, it was my duty to arrange all the things. So, after a long discussion, when I could not give any more arguments, I naturally agreed to arrange it, and as samples, I was given two arms : one was a small revolver and another was a small pistol. They said that these two arms were much improved, and they were very convenient to handle, and that these would be very useful for the Indian revolutionaries. Therefore, as a first step. I was to arrange it in such a manner that these two samples reached the Indian revolutionaries and after they had examined these two samples, they would inform us, how many of these pistols and revolvers they would require.

There were three persons present when we held discussions about arms. One was Saumyendranath Tagore, another Nalini Gupta, and the third man was Mr. Sohan as he was introduced to me. I knew Saumyendranath Tagore and Nalini Gupta, but I did not know Mr. Sohan ; and after these talks, I could never trace him. Anyway, I took

the revolvers and started from Berlin. At night, when I reached the French border, I found that the intelligence police of that frontier post were ready and looking for a particular person and since I was the only dark-skinned man in that train, these three intelligence men in black dress came straight to me and asked me whether they could see my luggage. The Customs had already examined my things, and they could not find anything; they just let me pass without any trouble. But these intelligence men came and searched me more thoroughly. They could not find anything in my box, but my overcoat pocket contained two revolvers, and they put their hand in my overcoat pocket and found them. Then I was taken to the police station where I was questioned for some time. After that, I was told that I could not enter France with arms because I was a foreigner. If I wanted to go back to Germany I could take them and go back to Germany or if I wanted to proceed to Paris, I would have to leave these two arms there with the police and go. So, I agreed to leave the arms there and go to France. When I reached Paris, to my surprise, I found that some of my friends knew about this mishap. Now the whole thing was a mystery to me, how within such a short time the French intelligence service could know that, somebody, an Indian, was carrying some arms. From the way the intelligence men approached me in the train, it was quite obvious that they had been informed beforehand, and when I reached Paris, I also found that they came to know about that within a short time. Anyhow, that incident was over. Another thing I must mention about my Berlin visit is that, I met two persons, both of them were internationally known. One was Virendranath Chattopadhyaya. He was playing a very important role at that time, He was the secretary of the anti-imperialist league which had its headquarters in Berlin. I was eager to meet Virendranath Chattopadhyaya because I was getting more and more interested in communism, and he was a leading figure. He took me to a restaurant, and we had a very interesting discussion for about two hours while we were having our dinner.

Then another person, I was introduced to, was M. N. Roy. Roy had been, at that time, I think, expelled from the Communist International, and he was in a very agitated mood, and all that he could think of, was, how to come back to India. He was planning about it at that time.

Now, after all these incidents, I came back to London. When I reached there, the British police took away my passport and said that I would have to visit their office to explain certain things, which, I did.

After a few days of this affair, one day, Raja Brajesh Singh of Kalakankar came to me and told me that M. N. Roy wanted a passport to go back to India. How to get that passport? The difficulty was to find a person who had some similarity with M. N. Roy and then to pinch that passport. All these difficulties had to be solved. At last we found a solution. We found that a person named Dr. Mahmud was going back to India via Paris. So Brajesh Singh and I decided to go to Paris and join him there. We did that. One day, we went out sight-seeing and Brajesh somehow managed to pinch that passport. That is how M. N. Roy managed to come back to India, and for quite a long time, that is, until his arrest, he was known as Dr. Mahmud in India.

Now, after coming back to England, I became very active in the Indian independence movement, particularly in London. The movement of the Indians was becoming quite important there. The initiative and leadership of this movement was taken by Shapurji Saklatvala. He was the first communist to become a member of the British Parliament, and, therefore, his influence among the Indian students was very great. Moreover, he had a very charming personality. He used to mix with the Indian students and discuss Indian problems with them. He was a nice man. He also used to invite us to his place and thereby, a large number of Indian students become very friendly with him. The Indian independence movement become stronger and stronger everyday. About this time, the persons who played a very important part in this movement were: Niharendu, Dutt

Mazumdar, Amlak Shamlal, Dr. C. L. Katial, Krishna Menon, Dr. K. M. Ashraf, Bimal Sen Gupta, Amiya Bose, Dr. Z. A. Ahmad, Sajjad Zaheer and Dr. J. C. Ghose, etc.

In this period, that is, between 1930 and 1932, two important events of our movement in London must be mentioned. First was the Second Round Table Conference in 1931 which was attended by Gandhi. The very fact that Gandhi was going to attend this Round Table Conference, which was organised by British imperialists to sabotage the mass movement of India, was very much disliked and opposed by the Indian students in London. Now, when Gandhi was going to attend this Conference, naturally, the Indian students were up against him. As a matter of fact, whenever Gandhi wanted to organise any meeting in London to explain his conduct we Indian students used to break-up the meetings. As a matter of fact, we did not allow him to address any meeting. Several meetings were arranged by his disciples but none of them succeeded. Another factor which incited the Indian students was the Bhagat Singh case. Bhagat Singh was a very popular figure among the Indian students and everybody felt that it was by betraying the Indian revolutionary movement and particularly Bhagat Singh that Gandhi had suspended the Civil Disobedience movement and decided upon Gandhi-Irwin Pact. The whole episode appeared to the Indian students in London as a great betrayal on Gandhi's part, and, therefore, the entire student community was opposed to him.

A K G. : Now, in 1931, when all these things were taking place, Tagore was also planning a visit to Russia. Do you know anything about it ?

P.S. : Yes, before Rabindranath visited Russia, he came to England, and the Indian students naturally were very enthusiastic and really glad to know that Rabindranath was going to Russia. At that time, the Soviet Union was a very terrible world. Bolshevism was an anathema to British Imperialism, and not so many Indians had visited that country. There were many misconceptions. So, when the Indian

students came to know that Rabindranath was going there to study that country at first hand, naturally they were very glad and arranged a reception, welcoming this idea of Rabindranath going to Russia and a very big meeting was held where he made a speech. In that speech he, several times, told us that he was very eager to know first hand about a new country, a new civilization and new people, and he was very happy about that, but all his friends were against this on the ground that his health was not in a very good condition, and therefore, he might not be able to sustain this strain. Anyway, later on, we found that there were several persons who were all the time with Tagore, trying to persuade him not to go there. One of these persons was C. F. Andrews. He went as far as Geneva and tried upto the last to prevent Tagore from going to Russia. Before that, Andrews himself had tried to get a visa to visit the Soviet Union together with Rabindranath but the Soviet Union refused a visa to Andrews. Anyhow, this episode was a very revealing factor to the Indian students. In this connection, I should mention that, later, when Rabindranath was in Russia, he wrote quite a number of letters, which, later on were published in a book form called *Russiar Chithi* (Letters from Russia). When we had organised the Progressive Writers' Association, Dr. Sasadhar Sinha translated these letters into English and tried to publish them in England, but mysteriously, we found that not a single publisher would dare to publish that book.

Now, after all these events, we now come to the period from 1934 to 1937. This was a very vital period. The Indian question, like the Chinese question, became a central issue in the anti-imperialist movement. Earlier, an organisation called, the League Against Imperialism had been established in Berlin, and a branch of that was in England. This movement was initiated by Harry Pollitt, R. Palme Dutt, Ben Bradley, Reginald Bridgeman, Percy Gladling Ralph Fox, and, of course, there was Saklatvala in the movement. This movement also became, in course of time, a very important movement not only for the Indians in

England but also for the British workers. A large number of meetings were held among the working class particularly, and especially many trade unions invited Indian students to hear from us about the Indian struggle. In this way, we carried the message of India, particularly about the Indian working class movement to the British working class. Thus a sort of spirit of brotherhood grew between the British workers and the Indian students and it became an important feature of the lives of the Indian students of those times. In this period, Indian students also participated in the anti-fascist movement. This anti-fascist movement was led by D.N. Pritt, Sir Stafford Cripps, John Strachey, Brailsford and Fenner Brockway. I may mention that, on many occasions, this anti-imperialist movement and anti-fascist movement converged, and became almost one because the colonial oppression and Nazi oppression often became the same for us.

In those days, I must mention about another movement in London in which the Indian students closely participated. That was the Left Book Club movement. The Left Book Club movement was organised by some progressive intellectuals particularly by a publisher called Victor Gollancz. A large number of copies of a particular book were printed and circulated at a very cheap price. Moreover, most of the books were concerned with anti fascist struggle, with the class struggle and with the colonial people's struggle. That is why, this movement became very popular in those days. This Left Book Club movement was initiated by John Strachey. There was also Harold Laski and Krishna Menon in it and many other progressive intellectuals of those days of England. This was the time when Krishna Menon's India League came into prominence. The Indian students knew Krishna Menon particularly as a representative of Nehru and the Congress. But I must say, that Krishna Menon was not a very popular person among the Indian students because the Indian students did not like his self-centred individualism. We also found that his certain manners were not much appreciated by the students.

He was a member of the Labour Party : he was a good speaker and, therefore he was very popular with the British working class. Although he was a member of the British Labour Party, he also closely cooperated with anti-imperialist league and with the British Communist Party. All these movements, that is, the anti-imperialist movement, the anti-fascist movement and the Indian League movement, were becoming very strong in those days.

In these movements, the prominent Indians of that period, i.e. from 1935 to 1937 were Dr. Mulk Raj Anand, K. S. Shelvenker, Sundar Kabadi, Sajjad Zaheer, Dr. Z. A. Ahmed, Mohan Kumaramangalam, Iqbal Singh, Dr. Sasadhar Sinha, Dr. J. C. Ghosh, etc. There was also Dr. C.L. Katial, who was a Labour Member in the London County Council. There were also Hajrah Begum, M. R. Masani, Indulal Yajnik, etc. In these days, both Nehru and Subhas Bose visited England. We often met them privately.

The general impression about Subhas Bose among the progressive Indian students in London at that time was that he had some illusions about fascism. He was quite impressed by some of the youth movements of those countries, particularly of Germany and Italy. He never made a secret that such youth movements had impressed him. But one thing we found was that Subhas Bose was a most uncompromising fighter against the British imperialism, and a staunch believer in the armed struggle. As a matter of fact, when he came to London, he came there with a view to going to Ireland to study the armed struggle that was going on there, and to make some contacts with the Irish revolutionaries. We also found that, though, Subhas Bose was not very well acquainted with Marxism, he was, nevertheless, a staunch revolutionary, that is, a revolutionary nationalist.

On the other hand, we found that though Nehru was quite well-read in Marxism—he knew a lot of Marxism and socialism—and was closer to the international communist movement, his character was not as strong as that of Subhas Bose, and we were not sure whether, in the long run,

Nehru would not betray the movement. Anyhow, at that time, these two figures appeared to us as complimentary to each other and we only could hope for the best.

About this period, I must mention another thing. We found that London was the meeting place of Indian intellectuals from all over India and I think it was in 1936 that an international anti-fascist writers' association was formed. We found quite a number of writers present in London, so we decided to launch the movement there. We organised a Progressive Writers' Association of which I became Secretary. We planned to translate and write some books. As I mentioned before, one of the first books we undertook to publish was the translation of Rabindranath's *Russian Chithi*.

A. K. G. : You mentioned that Andrews wanted to prevent Rabindranath from going to Russia. Could you say what Andrews actually had in mind ? What were the reasons that he gave for this ?

P. S. : The apparent reason that Andrews put forward was that of health. He insisted that Rabindranath was old and Russia was a difficult country. It was not advanced, there were no good hotels, and Rabindranath would not get sufficient care. And because of his ill health, he might not be able to stand that journey. But, actually, many of the Indian students had some doubts about the integrity of Andrews, though he pretended to be the friend of the poor. We Indian students, knew about that kind of affair, the pretences and hypocrisy and all this Gandhi *puja*. We could see through the role of many such persons. Of course, I cannot be absolutely certain about these things but after reading the diary of Romain Rolland, it is quite apparent that the motive of Andrews in trying to prevent Rabindranath from going to Russia was not at all because of reason of health, it was absolutely political.

A. K. G. : Could you tell me a little about what have you found in Romain Rolland's diary ?

P. S. : Romain Rolland himself has expressed his suspicion about the role of Andrews in this respect. When Rabindranath was on his way to Russia, he stopped at Geneva where Andrews and all these so-called friends made a last attempt to prevent Rabindranath from going to Russia. All these things are noted down by Romain Rolland in his diary.

A. K. G. : You were talking about the Progressive Writers' Association. Would you kindly continue ?

P. S. : Our attempt at organising the Progressive Writers' Association was so successful that many people, many writers in India got in touch with us, and we decided that this movement must be launched immediately and it so happened that soon after that, Mulk Raj Anand, Sajjad Zaheer, Iqbal Singh, etc. came back to India and set themselves to organise that Progressive Writers' Association. I think, the second all India conference was held in Calcutta in 1938 and I believe that most of the well-known writers in India of that time had gathered in that meeting and they gladly organised the All India Progressive Writers' Association, which played, during the War, a very important role in Indian political and literary life.

One other thing, I must mention about this period, about our activities in London and Europe. It was in 1935, just one year before the Spanish Civil War started, four Indian students, including Dr. Z. A. Ahmed and I, decided to visit Spain and study Spanish, which was coming to the forefront in the anti-fascist struggle. We took a circular trip of forty-five days and made a trip of the whole country from north to south and from east to west. We had a very first-hand experience of the country. Of course, in 1935, we could not see that the Civil War would start so soon. As soon as the Civil War started and when the International Brigade movement started in London, we Indian students, also decided to send an Indian contingent with that International Brigade. We made up a list and one of us, Gopal Mukund Huddar by name, a Maharashtrian, did succeed in going to Spain with the

International Brigade in one of the first batches. But, later on, we found that the rest of us could not go to Spain on the ground that none of us had military training. The Spanish government told us, that in Spain, they had millions of people, who also required military training, and after giving them military training, they could send them to the fighting line. But foreigners, without military training, would have immense difficulties and, therefore, it was better for us not to join the International Brigade movement. This is how our plan to join the International Brigade fell through. Anyway, it is worth-while mentioning because many people probably don't know that an Indian had actually taken part in the fighting in the Spanish Civil War on the side of the progressive forces there.

A. K. G. : Actually, this is unknown. This is fascinating piece of news.

P. S. : And then I came to know afterwards that when G.M. Huddar came back to India, he was given a warm reception and he, for some time, became quite well-known in India. But unfortunately, most people have forgotten about that episode which, I believe, is an important event as regards India's part in the International movement. Later on, I am sure that when Nehru went to England, we also talked with him about Indians joining the International Brigade. He was very much in favour of it. Subhas Bose was also in favour of it. But, unfortunately, we could not find any Indian there who had military training. That is why we could not send more people to Spain.

While in England, that is up to 1937, among our various activities, one particular thing I would like to mention is how we used to send communist literature to India. Students in England felt that what Indian revolutionary intellectuals wanted most in India was progressive, particularly, Marxist literature. From the communist Indian students groups, I was given the charge of regularly sending literature to India. There was a fund and I used to get a lot of communist books and all the periodicals published in English in quite a substantial number. I used to send them by various means. I

used to copy the covers of the publications of the Salvation Army. They were innocent covers I noted the addresses of well-known persons in India. Most of these packets used to reach the proper places. That we came to know afterwards. Apart from this we also persuaded important people who visited London to take with them some Marxist literature. For instance, Radhakrishnan, when we proposed to him that we wanted to send a large consignment of Marxist literature to India he gladly accepted our proposal, but only said: "If the police catches it, I am not responsible." Anyway, we sent two large boxes of Marxist classics with Radhakrishnan. Anyway, not only Radhakrishnan, but people like Nalini Sircar and many other people also, whom the British Government probably did not suspect, brought quite often a large amount of communist literature and handed over the books to our people. In this way, a very great want was met by our efforts from London.

Another important thing for the Indian movement could also be mentioned here. When some of the Indian students joined the Communist Party of Great Britain, we found that all the countries were represented direct on the Communist International except India. India was represented through the British Communist Party. We raised questions about it that why India, which was such a big country and facing vast problems, was not directly represented when other nations were. We were told by the comrades of the British Communist Party that the party was illegal in India, and there were many other practical difficulties. That was why, direct representation was not possible, but we said that there were other countries where the communist parties were illegal, and if they could be directly represented on Communist International why not India? After M. N. Roy's expulsion, no Indian represented the Indian party on the Communist International. We insisted that the British Communist Party should send a memorandum; actually we drew up a memorandum and handed it over to the British Communist Party and asked them to forward it to the

Communist International as well as to the Indian Communist Party, but we did not know what happened to memorandum after that. After 1937, I left London and went to Paris.

A.K.G. : Mr. Sengupta, could you kindly give us an account of your days in Paris up to the fall of Paris ?

P. S. : In 1936, I went to Paris in order to meet some well-known Indian revolutionaries like Heramba Lal Gupta and Dr. Pandurang Khankhoje, who had come from Mexico to the international exhibition organised by the French popular front government. At that time, many other old revolutionaries had also come to Paris. I was very disappointed with our old revolutionaries. I found that they had completely stopped growing mentally, although they lived directly in the midst of world epoch-making events. This was not only the case with our old revolutionaries, but also later on, I found the same with Indian students in London, who were much younger, who were so very active in the communist movement, in the Indian independence movement in London, and who claimed loudly about themselves that they were communists ; later on, after they came to India, they had discarded their ideology and went in various directions.

However, I also attended, about this time, the World Peace Congress held in Paris. One of the personalities attending this Congress, I definitely remember was : Pasionaria La of Spain, who got the most tumultuous ovation. As an orator, she made a tremendous impression on that large gathering. There was also Theodore Dreiser, the well-known American writer, who had just then joined the American Communist Party also. He also made his speech at that Congress, and that speech moved the audience very much. It should be also mentioned that Nehru attended that Congress, and next to Pasionaria La, he got the most ovation.

Then, in 1937, I went to Paris with a view to taking my doctorate at the Sorbonne University. My main purpose was to study the Popular Front movement as well as the French Communist Party, which was at that time, playing a glorious role in the international communist and cultural movements.

In Paris, at that time, the number of Indian students was not more than twenty. There was a small students' association, of which I became President. I studied under the guidance of Prof. Marc Bloch, who was an authority on feudal history and wrote seven well-known books on that subject. During the War, he was killed by the Nazis. The French professors, with whom I came in contact, had great sympathies, for the Indian cause and they helped the Indian students in every way. There were one or two among them who even went out of their way to help the Indian students. The French government used to give scholarships to the students of many nations but not the Indians. When the French Popular Government came to power, it gave two scholarships to the Indian students, of which I got one. Many of the students, and some Indians also among them, lived in the *Cite 'Universite'*, about fifteen minutes journey from the Sorbonne by the underground train. Here, the students got many facilities: cheap food and low rent. In that beautiful locality and surroundings, many nations had built their own buildings for their own students on free land donated by the French government. During the Popular Front Government, the French government offered free land to India to build such a house but the British Indian government was not in the least interested. Thereupon, Prof. Sylvain Levy and some other French professors tried to make some rich Indians take up the matter. The Maharaja of Baroda and the Aga Khan finally agreed to build a hostel for the Indian students at the *Cite 'Universite'*, but they could not, unfortunately, agree on the architecture of the building. So the project did not materialise. At that time, France was experiencing a rapid development in all directions—in science, in art, in theatre, in painting, in literature, and, above all, in the working class movement. The working class was in a very militant mood. They were fighting for a forty-hour week, better working conditions, higher wages, etc. In order to break the resistance of the capitalists, who mostly supported the fascist groups, the working class began to occupy the factories under the gui-

dance of the French Communist Party. The French workers organised a big movement in support of the Spanish people who were heroically fighting against the fascist aggression. France itself was on the verge of a civil war. French students played an important role in these movements on the side of the workers. How Leon Blum, Daladier conspired with their own reactionaries and with the British imperialists, to isolate the Spanish government by imposing the non-intervention policy on that and ultimately, causing its defeat, brought about the new pact with Hitler and Mussolini and finally banned the Communist Party, all this is too long a story to become clear. The new pact widely opened the door for Hitler to attack the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union became completely isolated. Hitler was ready to take up arms, but the Soviet Union was still unprepared militarily to resist the Nazi aggression. By that time, the Soviet Union had completed only First Five Year Plan and was carrying on with the Second Five Year Plan. It was a super human task for Russia to transform a backward peasant country into a modern industrialist country within such a short time. So, the most important factor for Soviet Union was time, for its defence preparations in order to resist Nazi Germany, which had built up the mightiest war machine, well-equipped with the most up to date weapons, tanks, aeroplanes, etc. It was a question of life and death for the Soviet Union. It is at that crucial juncture that Stalin made the non aggression pact with Hitler. This pact was like a bolt from the blue. Nobody expected it, and no one could imagine that such a thing—a pact between Stalin and Hitler was at all possible. The British and French imperialist, who had given the *carte blanche* to Hitler by their pact, for their war against the Soviet Union, were completely nonplussed and they felt frustrated and alarmed. They could not imagine that Stalin would so easily upset their apple-cart. The reactions of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact among the progressive circle were varied. The Indian student community generally acclaimed it and were glad to see that the plans of the im-

perialist were frustrated, but among many of the French and British progressive intellectuals, the pact caused much confusion. Some of them, who were too sentimental and emotional, felt as if Stalin had betrayed them and it was strange sight to see those who were a few days ago red-hot communists, gradually drifting towards the reactionary camp. Some of them even urged an immediate war against the Soviet Union.

During the Finnish-Soviet War, the confusion became more confounded and the French newspapers were carrying on a terrific propaganda against the Soviet Union and the French Communist Party. When Hitler attacked Poland in 1939, France and England declared war against Germany. But it was a mere paper declaration. There was no sign of war or any sign of preparation on the part of France or Germany. When Hitler was finishing off Poland, the French army was sitting tight on their Maginot Line, but they did not fire a single shot against the Nazis. The French and the British Governments were still hoping that Hitler after conquering Poland, would attack the Soviet Union. The leading French papers, I well remember, that time were publishing detailed maps and plans of how the French army and navy would attack the Soviet Union through the Black Sea and Baltic Sea. But after conquering Poland, Hitler at once turned his guns not against Russia but against France. Within ten days, France was finished off. Hardly any serious resistance was given to the Nazi army, not to talk about myths of the First World War. The French rulers had been boasting that the German army would break its neck if it had dared to attack their formidable Maginot Line, but when the actual work came, the Maginot Line simply melted away. When Hitler started his offensive against France no one heard about the existence of Maginot Line for which France had spent billions and billions of francs, and on which the entire French population was dependent for their defence. Actually, what was happening on the war front, no one in Paris could know. The ministers, the newspapers, the radio, were shouting all the time that the Nazis would be

resisted to the last, not an inch of French soil would be occupied by the Nazis, but we in Paris never saw any tank passing through its streets, any army movement or any French plane passing over our heads. All this time, the Communist Party was banned, the party press was suppressed, many party leaders had been arrested, and the other leaders and many party militants had gone underground. At this time, there was terrific confusion among the rank and file of the party and its sympathisers. It was about this time that there was a strong rumour that if the Germans came near Paris, the Parisian workers led by the Communist Party, would organise another *Paris Commune*, and at this time many Parisians and some Indians too were leaving Paris in order to see the *Paris Commune*, not realising that under the circumstance, another *Paris Commune* was not possible. After two or three days, one morning, as I was going to a cafe for my breakfast, I found that Paris was rather unusually dark. At first, I thought it might be a very foggy and rainy day, but in the cafe, I was told that it was a smokescreen arranged by the French government in order to give its ministers and others some time to escape. Paris had fallen without any resistance and unknown to its people. The Nazi army was already in Paris. It was a mystery to many people, how a leading and powerful imperialist country like France could fall within less than two weeks and without any fighting worth the name. It was a case of wholesale betrayal by the entire ruling class. A parallel instance came to my mind at that time—the betrayal at the Battle of Plassey, 1757. All the Indian students had already left Paris. There was no time to make contacts with French friends. I took some clothes in my rucksack, but I had to leave all my books—a valuable collection including some rare and out of print books. No buses or trains were running from Paris. Only the Paris underground railway was still running. I went as far I could by that underground train and then started walking towards the south.

A.K.G. : Mr. Sengupta, you left Paris and met Subhas Bose in February, 1942. Would you kindly describe how you spent this time and how did you come in touch with Subhas Bose ?

P. S. : After leaving Paris, as I said before, with a rucksack on my back, I started walking towards the south not knowing where to go. Anyhow, after about ten days' walking in this manner, sleeping in any barn or on the roadside—fortunately it was summer—at last I reached the town of Toulouse in the middle of France. There I went to the University and met a professor whom I found sympathetic and helpful. He took me as his student and I continued my research work there. He also arranged for the continuance of my old scholarship.

A.K.G. : What was his name ?

P. S. : His name was Prof. Fouche. Then after studying there for about six months, I came to know that Subhas Bose—I should rather say, I read in a newspaper there—while going to Afghanistan had lost his life in an air crash. For this, I was very sorry and sad but we could not believe that the news was true. Anyhow, about six months more were spent. Then, one day, we read in a Swiss paper that Subhas Bose had reached Germany. From that news, we could see that Subhas Bose was not dead. On the other hand he had reached Germany and I thought that certainly he had come to Germany, not for any change of air but with a very important political plan and, therefore, we were very hopeful that something would happen very soon.

Now, towards the end of 1941 or the beginning of 1942, I got information in Toulouse that Subhas Chandra had come to Paris and was meeting all the Indian students, who were dispersed all over France. He would stay there for some time and wanted to meet all the Indian students. Particularly, I had information from him saying that he knew me in London and, therefore, he wanted to meet me. So, by February, I came back to Paris. As you know, Paris was under German occupation at that time. But I got a special permit from the military authorities, rather Netaji had arranged about that, so I could go to Paris.

A.K.G. : Mr. Sengupta, I would like to ask you an important question as far as our contemporary history is concerned. That is about 1941, and Netaji in Paris. Well, by 1942, you were a confirmed Marxist. What induced you to join Netaji under the shadow of the Axis Powers ?

P. S. : When the War was going on, we heard about Netaji for first time in a very curious manner. We learned that Netaji had escaped from India, had gone to Kabul and from Kabul, he was flying somewhere by plane and that plane had crashed and he was dead. That was in the beginning of 1941. Then, after that, for a long time, we did not hear anything about it. Suddenly, at the beginning of 1942, there was news in all the papers that Subhas Chandra had reached Berlin. Naturally, we were surprised and thought that something was going on because Subhas Chandra had gone to Berlin certainly with some plan. Now, after some time, we again heard about Subhas Chandra also in very strange circumstances. At that time, I must tell you, that when the Germans occupied Paris, we Indians, since we were British subjects and had British passports, had to keep away from the Germans. Therefore, I, with several other Indian students, started walking towards the south of France, because there was no train service, no bus service, and therefore, walking was the only way. In this way, walked more than two hundred kilometres and reached Marseilles. Then from Marseilles I went to Toulouse and got myself admitted in Toulouse University.

Then, in the month of July, I was sent information that we should come to Paris to meet Subhas Chandra who had come to meet all the Indian students. So, the news, though very sudden, was very important, and I thought, wherever Subhas Chandra was, I had to go and meet him, and discuss with him what were his plans. I came to Paris and met him there together with other students. We had a meeting and there Subhas Chandra explained his plan. In short, he was thinking of organising the Indian National Army. We asked him how was it

possible to organize an I.N.A. in Germany at that time. He said that the Germans and Italians had already captured about ten thousands Indians from different areas of War; that was going on particularly in Egypt, Near East and other places. So, there was good deal of opportunity to do propaganda among the Indian prisoners of war and convince them to form the Indian National Army. But the difficulty was in Germany, there were hardly any Indians at that time. In France, there were still a number of Indians, although most of the Indian students had left France, as soon as the War had broken out. Anyway, we discussed the matter for a long time. Our main question to Subhas Chandra was : how should we Indians, colonial people, go to Germany which was under the domination of Nazis, who were racists as well as Indian-haters. Therefore, how was it possible for we Indians to go there and form the Indian National Army. We felt that it brought out a lot of political questions. We could not go into details about these things, but as regards the formation of the Indian National Army, he had a detailed discussion with Hitler and many other German leaders, and they had all promised him help in this matter. Our questions was that we Indians had to be sure that we would not be used, that is, this Indian National Army would not be used against the Soviet Union. On that question Subhas Bose said that he had already made this point clear to the German authorities. He had told them that Germany and India had a common enemy, Great Britain, and, therefore, we should fight only against British Imperialism. We should not fight against the Soviet Union. I must say here one thing that once Hitler had attacked the Soviet Union the entire character of the War changed. Since Hitler had attacked the Soviet Union, our tasks also changed. One of these tasks was that while we were struggling for our national liberation, we should also, as Indians, like the proletariat of every country, make certain that the Soviet Union's victory was assured. We could not thus help Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union in anyway. On that point Subhas Chandra made it very clear to us that he had raised the

matter with the German authorities. Subhas Chandra told them that the entire Indian people's sympathy lay with Soviet Union, and on that matter we should be given absolute assurance, that the Indian National Army would not be used against the Soviet Union. As a matter of fact, our work was against Great Britain and on this point we must stick together. We could make a common front against only Great Britain and we were not concerned with any other power in this war. So, on all these points, German authorities, Subhas Chandra said, had agreed with him.

A.K.G. : Subhas Chandra was quite honest about it. I have seen this that he really conveyed the whole thing to the German authorities at the appropriate time.

P. S. : Yes, in this respect, there was no question of diplomacy or anything. Subhas Chandra himself was absolutely adamant on this point and he was absolutely sincere about that. That was why we never doubted his statement or his honesty

Now, after discussing all the details about going to Germany, we also had several points to discuss amongst ourselves. I must say, that in France, at that time, apart from myself, there were quite a few others who also called themselves Marxists and communists. Actually, some of them were quite well-known in India as communists in Europe. So the most vital problem for us was, how as Marxists, we could go to Germany, to Nazi Germany particularly to form the I. N. A. This was really a very serious question and as a matter of fact, we never thought that such a problem would ever arise before us.

A.K.G. : Who were the other people apart from A. C. N. Nambiar ?

P. S. : A. C. N. Nambiar was related to Sarojini Naidu. I think, he was the brother-in-law of Sarojini Naidu, and he was also very intimate with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. He was also very well known as a communist and lived in Germany for a long time. He was expelled by Hitler when he came to power ; so he was a person of a long

standing, and he actually fought for Indian independence in Europe for a long time. There was also Dr. J. K. Banerjee, there was Dr. Suresh Chandra and myself. These were the known communists and there were many others who were communist sympathisers. So, this was the most vital question for us. For a long time we could not decide. We saw that if the I. N. A. could be founded, it might serve a revolutionary purpose in the future. But as Marxists how could we get to Germany? This was a very delicate question, and it took up a long time to decide on it. There were many other things which Subhas Chandra also pointed out. He told us that this was certainly a very delicate question for us, but if Stalin could make a "Non-Aggression Pact" with Hitler, then there was nothing wrong for us, Indians, to come to a similar understanding with Nazi Germany. This was certainly a point which could not be ignored lightly. Now, history moves in a zigzag manner and not at all in a straight line. This question of the Second World War was a very complicated question. On the one side, we had Russia, and it was the duty of the international proletariat as well as all colonial peoples to support her. At the same time, as a colonial people, we also had our duty to fight for our independence. If that was so, if for Indians, the first question was to keep India's independence struggle in the forefront, then we had to consider the matter in a different way.

In the complicated situation, then prevalent in 1942, another aspect of this War appeared to me at that time. After prolonged thinking for two or three days, it appeared to me that in a war, there were generally two results. Either a country lost the war or won the war. But apart, from these two results, there was also a third possibility, and that was that before a decision could be reached in a war, an internal revolution could break out in a country. Now, in the Second World War, what happened? Hitler invaded Russia, the fate of the invader was not very good. Take, for instance, Napoleon. Napoleon, such a military genius invaded Russia, and was completely ruined. Besides, Bismarck had warned Ger-

many that she should never fight on two fronts and in spite of that warning, Hitler had plunged into the war on two fronts. So, after analysing all these facts, we came to the conclusion that after Hitler's invasion of Russia, he had to employ his best army, his resources and everything to conquer Russia; that is, he was waging a war at that time from Leningrad to Odeśsa, to Crimea, which was over a thousand miles, and he had to employ all along this front more than two million soldiers at that time. What would be the fate of this army? As they would go deeper and deeper into that vast Russia, they would be swamped as Napoleon's hordes were swamped before. Therefore, a time could come, after Hitler had met his debacle in Russia, when discontent and anti-Nazi feelings of the German people, particularly German workers, could become strong and when Nazi Germany would become militarily weak, then there would have been a good possibility of a revolution in Germany. In the First World War, before any decision of the war had been reached, the revolution in Russia broke out in 1917. Also in Germany itself, the revolution had broken out quite some time before Germany was finally defeated. So, in this way, there was a good chance that a revolution, in some form or other, would break out in Germany too. That I must also mention, this possibility almost came to be true and was proved by an attempt on Hitler's life. Many people have not been well informed about the serious attempt which was made on Hitler's life in the summer of 1944.

A.K.G. : Stauffenberg plot.

P. S. : Stauffenberg plot, that is to say, the best section of the German army, a total of one million German soldiers, had already met their ruin in Stalingrad battle in January 1943. That had broken the backbone of the German army; slowly and gradually its repercussions were felt in Germany. In the meantime, the Russian army, after defeating Hitler at Stalingrad, advanced gradually towards the German frontier and by the middle of 1944, they had already reached the border and were about to cross it. There was fear all over

Germany that soon the Russians would come to Berlin and occupy it. It was at that critical time that in the German High Command, (though there were from the very beginning of the war) sharp differences of opinion, showed up. There was one section German Generals who followed Bismarck's warning, that Germany must not wage war on two fronts and was opposed to attacking the Soviet Union before they had finished off the Western Powers. So, after the German army had been defeated in Stalingrad this section of the German army became disgruntled and they wanted to assert themselves. They were very much discontented with Hitler; they saw that he was taking Germany to complete ruin; therefore they wanted to do something about it. So they started a plot against Hitler, in which not only the most important Generals and members of German General Staff, but also many diplomats and politicians gradually joined. Now, about this plot many books have come out recently, and one can go through them to know the details. What I want to emphasise is that this plot was a very serious affair. General Stauffenberg was, I think a very high up in the German General Staff; so he was a very important man and was always in contact with Hitler; he was one of the few who could go and see Hitler any time. He went to see Hitler with a hand bag, ostensibly, to discuss the plans about the German offensive. When he returned he left this handbag, in which there was a time bomb, which exploded. Unfortunately, Hitler was not killed, although several others were killed. Hitler himself was seriously injured. One of his hands was paralysed for ever. Anyway, I was telling you this, because the question of German revolution was not just an imagination. Conditions were created in Germany after the battle of Stalingrad, which gradually might have led to a German revolution. Now, suppose this attempt on Hitler had succeeded, what would have happened? Of course, one could say that the leaders of this anti-Hitler plot were all reactionaries. But the point is, that, once the ball was set rolling, could it have been stopped at that point only?

Power, having gone to the reactionaries, would the people have remained quiet? Not at all, in my opinion. This assassination of Hitler would have created a revolutionary situation, for among the German proletariat there was a large number who had not forgotten their past Social Democratic and Communist struggles. So, seeds of revolution were there in Germany and after the defeat at Stalingrad, there was a lot of discontent in Germany. Therefore, what I say is that if such a plot had succeeded, it would not have stopped at that point only, but it would have set the ball rolling and the German revolution might have begun from that point. These are all speculations. The thing did not happen and, therefore, circumstances took a different turn but my point was that the question of revolution in Germany was not absurd. It was a real question and it might have happened. If it did not happen, it was just our misfortune.

At that time, in France, when we discussed these things, we only tried to analyse the future of the War in a Marxist way. We were sanguine and, as a matter of fact, all the time we had been propagating that after the end of the War, we should prepare for a revolution. In that way, if we could have formed the I.N.A. in Germany, and if there had been a revolution in Germany after the assassination of Hitler, then the question would have arisen, that in a revolutionary situation of that nature, what would have been the role of the I.N.A.? In a revolutionary situation we were convinced that the role of the I.N.A., the character of the I.N.A. would have also become revolutionized, and we would have become a part of the world revolution, a sort of proletarian revolution. Probably that would have depended on preparations in India.

Anyway, there were the potentialities, the possibilities, of the war, particularly the end of the War. We had to take into consideration and analyse all the possibilities and potentialities in a Marxist way. In this light, finally, my comrades and I decided, keeping all these potentialities of revolution in front of us, that we might join the I.N.A.

although we were fully conscious that it would be tremendously hazardous and a sort of an adventure. But after-all, all revolutions are to a certain extent an adventure ; everything is uncertain and unless one plunges into the turmoil and uncertainties ; unless one takes risks, one cannot gain anything. So, we decided to take the risk. Whether we were right or wrong as Marxists, we could not judge. We thought that the future would judge our actions, but for the time being, this seemed to us a rational course of action, because we were convinced, like Subhas Bose, that without an armed struggle, India could not achieve independence. If we accepted that, then question was : how would there be an armed struggle at that time without any army. Now, that we had got an opportunity to build up an army, we should seize that opportunity; that was the main question. Now, the future of the war, whether there would be victory or defeat ; how Germany would end up ; all these questions were uncertain. We could not decide. But we came to the conclusion that the situation in Europe, war situation, offered us a chance for taking struggle for India's liberation a step forward, and which would give us a chance for armed struggle against British imperialism. That was the conclusion we arrived at. We decided that whatever would be the future, we should go to Germany and build up the I.N.A. We, who were Marxists, also thought that if we went now and the Indian National Army was built up, it was better, if we Marxists entered into that army and tried to create our own influence. We know that in this army there would be all sorts of people ; there would be also probably pro-Marxists, therefore, it was also necessary for the communists to go into it and create their own influence. We had an example before us, a similarity. We knew that the German Communist Party had instructed their followers that they should enter all sorts of German Nazi organisations and try to exert their influence as carefully as they could. So, from that point of view also it was necessary that the communists should enter into the I.N.A. and exert their influence as much as possi-

ble. We also found that it was necessary that some communists should also meet Subhas Bose to guide the affairs of Indian politics because Bose, though very dynamic and sincerely a revolutionary personality, was still on certain vital political matters very uncertain or hesitant. Therefore, we also thought it would be necessary for us to help him in ideological matters. So long as he was sincere, we believe that we could influence him to some extent at least, and that would be a gain for the Indian revolution.

A K G. : Mr. Sengupta : That is quite all right. You have explained the issue fully, and I think, quite adequately. Only one point remains : you must have foreseen at that point, when you were taking this vital decision of your life that the international Communist Movement would take a critical stand and the communists in India would have to take that line, which would ultimately produce the slogan 'People's War and support war efforts of British Imperialism'. What were your calculations about these two points : the International Communist Movement's stand and the Indian communist's standpoint regarding 'People's War' ?

P. S. : That is a very interesting question and vital question for the history of Indian Communist Party. It must be pointed out, that the leadership of the C.P.I. was already revisionist long before the War. This War gave us an excellent opportunity for preparing the Indian revolution and the international slogan of 'People's War' was a correct slogan and thoroughly applicable to India. Of course, it must be remembered that just at that moment, 1942-43, it was not possible to wage a 'people's war' against Great Britain. That is not the point. I mean to say, in 1943, it was not that India could have led a 'people's war' against Great Britain. The vital point was preparation for the people's war. It would have come in any case. My question was : Did the C.P.I. prepare for that eventuality ? It did not ; it never thought of it ; it betrayed the Indian revolution from the very beginning. The point to remember is that after the battle of Stalingrad

the whole question of the War had changed. Up to that battle, the whole world was in doubt about the fate of the War; who would win, who would lose, but after Stalingrad, the whole thing was cleared up. Everybody knew that battle of Stalingrad was the beginning of the final victory for the Allies and for the Soviet Union. If that was so, Indian Communist Party leaders also said that in so many words, then my accusation was : What did the C.P.I. do to prepare for the coming revolution in India ? They should have tried from that moment, that is after the battle at Stalingrad ; they should have prepared for that revolution. Instead of that, they continued to support Britain's war efforts and they went to such an extent that they sacrificed all the interests of the working class. For instance they decided that there should be wage freeze ; that the workers should not strike. Now, such an absurd policy, one could not imagine. During the war, the prices increased by leaps and bounds ; the exploitation of the working class also increased, the misery of working class increased day after day, and even then, Communist Party would not let them strike or fight for wage increase. At the same time, they gave the slogan of people's war. Where was 'people's war' in India ? How did the Communist Party carry out this 'people's war' in India ? It was such a big bluff, a deception of the people. As a matter of fact, the Communist Party did not go anywhere near the people or near the war. It was a 'people's war' without the people and without war ; that was the bluff of the Communist Party. The point is, had the C.P.I. analysed the situation and seen what was coming, it could have easily carried a revolution successfully in India. In India also, the things developed very quickly after the battle at Stalingrad, and in two to three years' time we had the situation when the Royal Indian Navy started a mutiny. From that event itself, the entire Indian revolution could have begun. As a matter of fact, when the R.I.N. sailors landed in Bombay, they went straight to the headquarters of the Communist Party, and they told party leaders, "Now, here you are with a revolution, now carry on with it." But our C. P. I. leaders did not know what to do, They went in search of their fathers i.e. the

Father of the Nation, Gandhi and another father of the nation, Jinnah. They wanted Gandhi and Jinnah to save India and to save the Communist Party. That was how the Indian revolution was betrayed, and I believe it was betrayed deliberately by the then revisionist leaders of the Indian Communist Party.
